



H O M E R.

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“The translation of Homer by Pope will never cease to be considered as a splendid monument of talent, which other translators may laudably hope to rival, but which they can never hope to surpass.”—GILBERT WAKEFIELD.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

THE ILIAD.

	PAGE
Book XIV.	5
— XV.	23
— XVI.	48
— XVII.	77
— XVIII.	101
— XIX.	121
— XX.	135
— XXI.	152
— XXII.	172
— XXIII.	191
— XXIV.	220
Appendix	249

THE ODYSSEY.

Book I.	253
— II.	269
— III.	283
— IV.	301



I L I A D.

B O O K X I V.

ARGUMENT.

Juno deceives Jupiter by the Girdle of Venus.

NESTOR, sitting at the table with Machaon, is alarmed with the increasing clamour of the war, and hastens to Agamemnon : on his way he meets with Diomed and Ulysses, whom he informs of the extremity of the danger—Agamemnon proposes to make their escape by night, which Ulysses withstands ; to which Diomed adds his advice, that, wounded as they were, they should go forth and encourage the army with their presence ; which advice is pursued—Juno, seeing the partiality of Jupiter to the Trojans, forms a design to overreach him : she sets off her charms with the utmost care, and, the more surely to enchant him, obtains the magic girdle of Venus—She then applies herself to the god of sleep, and with some difficulty persuades him to seal the eyes of Jupiter : this done, she goes to Mount Ida, where the god, at first sight, is ravished with her beauty, sinks in her embraces, and is laid asleep—Neptune takes advantage of his slumber, and succours the Greeks : Hector is struck to the ground with a prodigious stone by Ajax, and carried off from the battle : several actions succeed ; till the Trojans, much distressed, are obliged to give way : the lesser Ajax signalizes himself in a particular manner.

BUT nor the genial feast, nor flowing bowl,
Could charm the cares of Nestor's watchful soul ;

His startled ears the increasing cries attend;
 Then thus, impatient, to his wounded friend:
 "What new alarm, divine Machaon, say, 5
 What mix'd events attend this mighty day?
 Hark! how the shouts divide, and how they meet,
 And now come full, and thicken to the fleet!
 Here, with the cordial draught, dispel thy care,
 Let Hecamede the strengthening bath prepare, 10
 Refresh thy wound, and cleanse the clotted gore;
 While I the adventures of the day explore."

He said: and seizing Thrasymedes' shield,
 (His valiant offspring,) hasten'd to the field;
 (That day the son his father's buckler bore;) 15
 Then snatch'd a lance, and issued from the door.
 Soon as the prospect open'd to his view,
 His wounded eyes the scene of sorrow knew:
 Dire disarray! the tumult of the fight,
 The walls in ruins, and the Greeks in flight. 20
 As when old ocean's silent surface sleeps,
 The waves just heaving on the purple deeps:
 While yet the expected tempest hangs on high,
 Weighs down the cloud, and blackens in the sky,
 The mass of waters will no wind obey; 25
 Jove sends one gust, and bids them roll away.
 While wavering counsels thus his mind engage,
 Fluctuates in doubtful thought the Pylian sage,
 To join the host, or to the general haste;
 Debating long, he fixes on the last: 30
 Yet, as he moves, the fight his bosom warms;
 The field rings dreadful with the clang of arms;
 The gleaming falchions flash, the javelins fly,
 Blows echo blows, and all or kill or die.

Him, in his march, the wounded princes meet, 35
 By tardy steps ascending from the fleet;
 The king of men, Ulysses the divine,
 And who to Tydeus owes his noble line.
 Their ships at distance from the battle stand,
 In lines advanced along the shelving strand; 40

Whose bay, the fleet, unable to contain
At length ; beside the margin of the main,
Rank above rank, the crowded ships they moor :
Who landed first, lay highest on the shore.
Supported on their spears, they took their way, 45
Unfit to fight, but anxious for the day.

Nestor's approach alarm'd each Grecian breast,
Whom thus the general of the host address'd :

“ Oh grace and glory of the Achaian name !
What drives thee, Nestor, from the field of fame ?
Shall then proud Hector see his boast fulfill'd, 51
Our fleets in ashes, and our heroes kill'd ?
Such was his threat, ah now too soon made good,
On many a Grecian bosom writ in blood !
Is every heart inflamed with equal rage 55
Against your king, nor will one chief engage ?
And have I lived to see with mournful eyes
In every Greek a new Achilles rise ?”

Gerenian Nestor then : “ So fate has will'd ;
And all-confirming time has fate fulfill'd. 60
Not he that thunders from the aerial bower,
Not Jove himself, upon the past has power.
The wall, our late inviolable bound,
And best defence, lies smoking on the ground :
Ev'n to the ships their conquering arms extend, 65
And groans of slaughter'd Greeks to heaven ascend.
On speedy measures then employ your thought,
In such distress, if counsel profit aught ;
Arms cannot much : though Mars our souls incite ;
These gaping wounds withhold us from the fight.”

To him the monarch : “ That our army bends, 71
That Troy triumphant our high fleet ascends,
And that the rampart, late our surest trust
And best defence, lies smoking in the dust :
All this from Jove's afflictive hand we bear, 75
Who, far from Argos, wills our ruin here.
Past are the days when happier Greece was bless'd,
And all his favour, all his aid confess'd ;

Now Heaven averse, our hands from battle ties,
And lifts the Trojan glory to the skies. 80

Cease we at length to waste our blood in vain,
And launch what ships lie nearest to the main;
Leave these at anchor till the coming night:
Then, if impetuous Troy forbear the fight,
Bring all to sea, and hoist each sail for flight. 85
Better from evils, well foreseen, to run,
Than perish in the danger we may shun."

Thus he. The sage Ulysses thus replies,
While anger flash'd from his disdainful eyes:
"What shameful words, unkingly as thou art, 90
Fall from that trembling tongue and timorous heart!
Oh were thy sway the curse of meaner powers,
And thou the shame of any host but ours!
A host, by Jove endued with martial might,
And taught to conquer, or to fall in fight: 95
Adventurous combats and bold wars to wage,
Employ'd our youth, and yet employs our age.
And wilt thou thus desert the Trojan plain?
And have whole streams of blood been spilt in vain?
In such base sentence if thou couch thy fear, 100
Speak it in whispers, lest a Greek should hear.
Lives there a man so dead to fame, who dares
'To think such meanness, or the thought declares?
And comes it ev'n from him whose sovereign sway
'The banded legions of all Greece obey? 105
Is this a general's voice that calls to flight,
While war hangs doubtful, while his soldiers fight?
What more could Troy? What yet their fate
denies

Thou givest the foe; all Greece become their prize.
No more the troops (our hoisted sail in view, 110
Themselves abandon'd) shall the fight pursue;
But thy ships flying, with despair shall see;
And owe destruction to a prince like thee."

"Thy just reproofs," Atrides calm replies,
"Like arrows pierce me, for thy words are wise. 115

Unwilling as I am to lose the host,
 I force not Greece to leave this hateful coast.
 Glad I submit, whoe'er, or young or old,
 Aught, more conducive to our weal, unfold."

Tydides cut him short, and thus began : 120

"Such counsel if you seek, behold the man
 Who boldly gives it; and what he shall say,
 Young though he be, disdain not to obey :
 A youth, who from the mighty Tydeus springs,
 May speak to councils and assembled kings. 125

Hear then in me the great Œnides' son,
 Whose honour'd dust, his race of glory run,
 Lies whelm'd in ruins of the Theban wall ;
 Brave in his life, and glorious in his fall ;
 With three bold sons was generous Prothous
 bless'd, 130

Who Pleuron's walls and Calydon possess'd ;
 Melas and Agrius, but (who far surpass'd
 The rest in courage) Œneus was the last.
 From him, my sire. From Calydon expell'd,
 He pass'd to Argos, and in exile dwell'd; 135

The monarch's daughter there, so Jove ordain'd,
 He won, and flourish'd where Adrastus reign'd ;
 There, rich in fortune's gifts, his acres till'd,
 Beheld his vines their liquid harvest yield,
 And numerous flocks that whiten'd all the field. 140
 Such Tydeus was, the foremost once in fame !

Nor lives in Greece a stranger to his name.
 Then, what for common good my thoughts inspire,
 Attend, and in the son respect the sire.

Though sore of battle, though with wounds op-
 press'd, 145

Let each go forth, and animate the rest,
 Advance the glory which he cannot share,
 Though not partaker, witness of the war.
 But lest new wounds on wounds o'erpower us quite,
 Beyond the missile javelin's sounding flight, 150
 Safe let us stand ; and from the tumult far,
 Inspire the ranks, and rule the distant war."

He added not: the listening kings obey,
Slow moving on; Atrides leads the way.
The god of ocean, to inflame their rage, 155
Appears a warrior furrow'd o'er with age;
Press'd in his own, the general's hand he took,
And thus the venerable hero spoke:

“Atrides, lo! with what disdainful eye
Achilles sees his country's forces fly; 160
Blind impious man! whose anger is his guide,
Who glories in unutterable pride.

So may he perish, so may Jove disclaim
The wretch relentless, and o'erwhelm with shame!
But Heaven forsakes not thee; o'er yonder sands
Soon shalt thou view the scatter'd Trojan bands 166
Fly diverse; while proud kings, and chiefs re-
nown'd,

Driven heaps on heaps, with clouds involved around
Of rolling dust, their winged wheels employ
To hide their ignominious heads in 'Troy.'” 170

He spoke, then rush'd amid the warrior crew;
And sent his voice before him as he flew,
Loud as the shout encountering armies yield,
When twice ten thousand shake the labouring field;
Such was the voice, and such the thundering sound
Of him, whose trident rends the solid ground. 176
Each Argive bosom beats to meet the fight,
And grisly war appears a pleasing sight.

Meantime, Saturnia from Olympus' brow,
High throned in gold, beheld the fields below; 180
With joy the glorious conflict she survey'd,
Where her great brother gave the Grecians aid.
But placed aloft, on Ida's shady height
She sees her Jove, and trembles at the sight.
Jove to deceive, what methods shall she try, 185
What arts, to blind his all-beholding eye?

At length she trusts her power; resolved to prove
The old, yet still successful, cheat of love;
Against his wisdom to oppose her charms,
And lull the lord of thunders in her arms. 190

Swift to her bright apartment she repairs,
 Sacred to dress and beauty's pleasing cares:
 With skill divine had Vulcan form'd the bower,
 Safe from access of each intruding power.
 Touch'd with her secret key, the doors unfold: 195
 Self closed, behind her shut the valves of gold.
 Here first she bathes; and round her body pours
 Soft oils of fragrance, and ambrosial showers:
 The winds, perfumed, the balmy gale convey
 Through heaven, through earth, and all the aerial
 way: 200

Spirit divine! whose exhalation greets
 The sense of gods with more than mortal sweets.
 Thus while she breathed of heaven, with decent
 pride

Her artful hands the radiant tresses tied;
 Part on her head in shining ringlets roll'd, 205
 Part o'er her shoulders waved like melted gold.
 Around her next a heavenly mantle flow'd,
 That rich with Pallas' labour'd colours glow'd:
 Large clasps of gold the foldings gather'd round.
 A golden zone her swelling bosom bound. 210

Far-beaming pendants tremble in her ear,
 Each gem illumined with a triple star.
 Then o'er her head she casts a veil more white
 Than new-fall'n snow, and dazzling as the light.
 Last her fair feet celestial sandals grace. 215

Thus issuing radiant, with majestic pace,
 Forth from the dome the imperial goddess moves,
 And calls the mother of the Smiles and Loves.

"How long," to Venus thus apart she cried,
 "Shall human strife celestial minds divide? 220
 Ah yet, will Venus aid Saturnia's joy,
 And set aside the cause of Greece and Troy?"

"Let heaven's dread empress," Cytheræa said,
 "Speak her request, and deem her will obey'd."

"Then grant me," said the queen, "those con-
 quering charms, 225
 That power, which mortals and immortals warms,

That love, which melts mankind in fierce desires,
And burns the sons of heaven with sacred fires !
For lo ! I haste to those remote abodes,
Where the great parents, sacred source of gods ! 230
Ocean and Tethys their old empire keep,
On the last limits of the land and deep.
In their kind arms my tender years were pass'd ;
What time old Saturn, from Olympus cast,
Of upper heaven to Jove resign'd the reign, 235
Whelm'd under the huge mass of earth and main.
For strife, I hear, has made the union cease,
Which held so long that ancient pair in peace.
What honour, and what love, shall I obtain,
If I compose those fatal feuds again ; 240
Once more their minds in mutual ties engage,
And what my youth has owed, repay their age !”

She said. With awe divine the queen of love
Obey'd the sister and the wife of Jove ;
And from her fragrant breast the zone unbraced, 245
With various skill and high embroidery graced.
In this was every art, and every charm,
To win the wisest, and the coldest warm :
Fond love, the gentle vow, the gay desire,
The kind deceit, the still reviving fire, 250
Persuasive speech, and more persuasive sighs,
Silence that spoke, and eloquence of eyes.
This on her hand the Cyprian goddess laid ;
“ Take this, and with it all thy wish,” she said.
With smiles she took the charm ; and smiling press'd
The powerful cestus to her snowy breast. 256

Then Venus to the courts of Jove withdrew ;
While from Olympus pleased Saturnia flew.
O'er high Pieria thence her course she bore,
O'er fair Emathia's ever-pleasing shore, 260
O'er Hæmus' hills with snows eternal crown'd ;
Nor once her flying foot approach'd the ground.
Then taking wing from Athos' lofty steep,
She speeds to Lemnos o'er the rolling deep,
And seeks the cave of Death's half-brother, Sleep.

“Sweet pleasing Sleep!” Saturnia thus began, 266
 “Who spread’st thy empire o’er each god and man ;
 If e’er obsequious to thy Juno’s will,
 Oh power of slumbers ! hear, and favour still.
 Shed thy soft dews on Jove’s immortal eyes, 270
 While sunk in love’s entrancing joys he lies.
 A splendid footstool, and a throne, that shine
 With gold unfading, Somnus, shall be thine,
 The work of Vulcan ; to indulge thy ease,
 When wine and feasts thy golden humours please.”

“Imperial dame,” the balmy power replies, 276
 “Great Saturn’s heir, and empress of the skies ;
 O’er other gods I spread my easy chain ;
 The sire of all, old Ocean, owns my reign,
 And his hush’d waves lie silent on the main. 280
 But how, unbidden, shall I dare to steep
 Jove’s awful temples in the dew of sleep ?
 Long since too venturous, at thy bold command,
 On those eternal lids I laid my hand,
 What time, deserting Ilion’s wasted plain, 285
 His conquering son, Alcides, plough’d the main.
 When lo ! the deeps arise, the tempests roar,
 And drive the hero to the Coan shore :
 Great Jove awaking, shook the bless’d abodes
 With rising wrath, and tumbled gods on gods : 290
 Me chief he sought, and from the realms on high
 Had hurl’d indignant to the nether sky,
 But gentle Night, to whom I fled for aid,
 (The friend of earth and heaven,) her wings display’d ;
 Empower’d the wrath of gods and men to tame, 295
 Ev’n Jove revered the venerable dame.”

“Vain are thy fears,” the queen of heaven replies,
 And speaking rolls her large majestic eyes :
 “Think’st thou that Troy has Jove’s high favour
 won,
 Like great Alcides, his all-conquering son ? 300

Hear, and obey the mistress of the skies,
 Nor for the deed expect a vulgar prize :
 For know, thy loved one shall be ever thine,
 The youngest Grace, Pasithae the divine."

"Swear then," he said, "by those tremendous
 floods 305

That roar through hell, and bind the invoking gods :
 Let the great parent earth one hand sustain,
 And stretch the other o'er the sacred main :
 Call the black Titans, that with Chronos dwell,
 To hear and witness from the depths of hell ; 310
 That she, my loved one, shall be ever mine,
 The youngest Grace, Pasithae the divine."

The queen assents, and from the infernal bowers
 Invokes the sable subtartarean powers,
 And those who rule the inviolable floods, 315
 Whom mortals name the dread Titanian gods.

Then swift as wind, o'er Lemnos' smoky isle,
 They wing their way, and Imbrus' seabeat soil,
 Through air unseen, involved in darkness glide,
 And light on Lectos, on the point of Ide— 320
 (Mother of savages, whose echoing hills
 Are heard resounding with a hundred rills :)
 Fair Ida trembles underneath the god :
 Hush'd are her mountains, and her forests nod.
 There on a fir, whose spiry branches rise 325
 To join its summit to the neighbouring skies,
 Dark in imbowering shade, conceal'd from sight,
 Sat Sleep, in likeness of the bird of night :
 (Chalcis his name by those of heavenly birth,
 But call'd Cymindis by the race of earth.) 330

To Ida's top successful Juno flies ;
 Great Jove surveys her with desiring eyes :
 The god, whose lightning sets the heavens on fire,
 Through all his bosom feels the fierce desire ;
 Fierce as when first by stealth he seized her charms,
 Mix'd with her soul, and melted in her arms. 336
 Fix'd on her eyes he fed his eager look,
 Then press'd her hand, and thus with transport spoke :

“Why comes my goddess from the ethereal sky,
And not her steeds and flaming chariot nigh?” 340

Then she: “I haste to those remote abodes
Where the great parents of the deathless gods,
The reverend Ocean and gray Tethys, reign,
On the last limits of the land and main.

I visit these, to whose indulgent cares 345
I owe the nursing of my tender years.

For strife, I hear, has made that union cease,
Which held so long that ancient pair in peace.

The steeds, prepared my chariot to convey
O’er earth and seas, and through the aerial way, 350
Wait under Ide: of thy superior power

To ask consent, I leave the Olympian bower;
Nor seek unknown to thee, the sacred cells
Deep under seas, where hoary Ocean dwells.”

“For that,” said Jove, “suffice another day; 355
But eager love denies the least delay.

Let softer cares the present hour employ,
And be these moments sacred all to joy.

Ne’er did my soul so strong a passion prove,
Or for an earthly or a heavenly love: 360

Not when I press’d Ixion’s matchless dame,
Whence rose Perithous, like the gods in fame.

Not when fair Danae felt the shower of gold
Stream into life, whence Perseus brave and bold.

Not thus I burn’d for either Theban dame: 365
(Bacchus from this, from that Alcides came:)

Nor Phœnix’ daughter, beautiful and young,
Whence godlike Rhadamanth and Minos sprung.

Not thus I burn’d for fair Latona’s face,
Nor comelier Ceres’ more majestic grace, 370

Not thus ev’n for thyself I felt desire,
As now my veins receive the pleasing fire.”

He spoke: the goddess with the charming eyes
Glows with celestial red, and thus replies:

“Is this a scene for love? On Ida’s height 375
Exposed to mortal and immortal sight;

Our joys profaned by each familiar eye ;
 The sport of heaven, and fable of the sky.
 How shall I e'er review the bless'd abodes,
 Or mix among the senate of the gods ? 380
 Shall I not think, that, with disorder'd charms,
 All heaven beholds me recent from thy arms ?
 With skill divine has Vulcan form'd thy bower,
 Sacred to love and to the genial hour ;
 If such thy will, to that recess retire, 385
 And secret there indulge thy soft desire."

She ceased : and smiling with superior love,
 Thus answer'd mild the cloud-compelling Jove :
 " Nor god nor mortal shall our joys behold,
 Shaded with clouds, and circumfused in gold ; 390
 Not ev'n the sun, who darts through heaven his rays,
 And whose broad eye the extended earth surveys."

Gazing he spoke, and kindling at the view,
 His eager arms around the goddess threw.
 Glad Earth perceives, and from her bosom pours
 Unbidden herbs and voluntary flowers : 396
 Thick newborn violets a soft carpet spread,
 And clustering lotos swell the rising bed,
 And sudden hyacinths the turf bestrow,
 And flamy crocus made the mountain glow. 400
 There golden clouds conceal'd the heavenly pair,
 Steep'd in soft joys, and circumfused with air ;
 Celestial dews, descending o'er the ground,
 Perfume the mount, and breathe ambrosia round.
 At length, with love and sleep's soft power op-
 press'd, 405

The panting Thunderer nods, and sinks to rest.

Now to the navy borne on silent wings,
 To Neptune's ear soft Sleep his message brings ;
 Beside him sudden, unperceived he stood,
 And thus with gentle words address'd the god : 410

" Now, Neptune ! now the important hour employ
 To check a while the haughty hopes of Troy :
 While Jove yet rests, while yet my vapours shed
 The golden vision round his sacred head ;

For Juno's love, and Somnus' pleasing ties, 415
Have closed those awful and eternal eyes."

Thus having said, the power of slumber flew,
On human lids to drop the balmy dew.
Neptune, with zeal increased, renews his care,
And towering in the foremost ranks of war, 420
Indignant thus: "Oh once of martial fame!
Oh Greeks! if yet ye can deserve the name!
This half-recover'd day, shall Troy obtain?
Shall Hector thunder at your ships again?
Lo, still he vaunts, and threats the fleet with fires,
While stern Achilles in his wrath retires. 426

One hero's loss too tamely you deplore,
Be still yourselves, and ye shall need no more.
Oh yet, if glory any bosom warms,
Brace on your firmest helms, and stand to arms:
His strongest spear each valiant Grecian wield, 431
Each valiant Grecian seize his broadest shield;
Let to the weak the lighter arms belong,
The ponderous targe be wielded by the strong.
Thus arm'd, not Hector shall our presence stay: 435
Myself, ye Greeks! myself will lead the way."

The troops assent; their martial arms they change;
The busy chiefs their banded legions range.
The kings, though wounded, and oppress'd with pain,
With helpful hands themselves assist the train; 440
The strong and cumbrous arms the valiant wield,
The weaker warrior takes a lighter shield.
Thus sheath'd in shining brass, in bright array
The legions march, and Neptune leads the way:
His brandish'd falchion flames before their eyes, 445
Like lightning flashing through the frightened skies.
Clad in his might, the earth-shaking power appears;
Pale mortals tremble, and confess their fears.

Troy's great defender stands alone unaw'd,
Arms his proud host, and dares oppose a god: 450
And lo! the god and wondrous man appear:
The sea's stern ruler there, and Hector here.

The roaring main, at her great master's call,
Rose in huge ranks, and form'd a watery wall
Around the ships : seas hanging o'er the shores, 455
Both armies join : earth thunders, ocean roars.
Not half so loud the bellowing deeps resound,
When stormy winds disclose the dark profound ;
Less loud the winds that from the Æolian hall
Roar through the woods, and make whole forests
fall ; 460
Less loud the woods, when flames in torrents pour,
Catch the dry mountain, and its shades devour :
With such a rage the meeting hosts are driven,
And such a clamour shakes the sounding heaven.
The first bold javelin urged by Hector's force, 465
Direct at Ajax' bosom wing'd its course ;
But there no pass the crossing belts afford :
(One braced his shield, and one sustain'd his sword.)
'Then back the disappointed Trojan drew,
And cursed the lance that unavailing flew ; 470
But 'scaped not Ajax : his tempestuous hand
A ponderous stone upheaving from the sand,
(Where heaps laid loose beneath the warrior's feet,
Or served to ballast, or to prop the fleet,)
Toss'd round and round, the missive marble flings ;
On the razed shield the falling ruin rings, 476
Full on his breast and throat with force descends ;
Nor deaden'd there its giddy fury spends,
But whirling on, with many a fiery round,
Smokes in the dust, and ploughs into the ground.
As when the bolt, red hissing from above, 481
Darts on the consecrated plant of Jove,
The mountain oak in flaming ruin lies,
Black from the blow, and smokes of sulphur rise,
Stiff with amaze the pale beholders stand, 485
And own the terrors of the almighty hand !
So lies great Hector prostrate on the shore ;
His slacken'd hand deserts the lance it bore ;
His following shield the fallen chief o'erspread ;
Beneath his helmet dropp'd his fainting head ; 490

His load of armour sinking to the ground,
 Clanks on the field ; a dead and hollow sound.
 Loud shouts of triumph fill the crowded plain ;
 Greece sees, in hope, Troy's great defender slain :
 All spring to seize him ; storms of arrows fly, 495
 And thicker javelins intercept the sky.

In vain an iron tempest hisses round ;
 He lies protected, and without a wound.

Polydamas, Agenor the divine,
 The pious warrior of Anchises' line, 500
 And each bold leader of the Lycian band,
 With covering shields (a friendly circle) stand.

His mournful followers, with assistant care,
 The groaning hero to his chariot bear ;
 His foaming coursers, swifter than the wind, 505
 Speed to the town, and leave the war behind.

When now they touch'd the mead's enamell'd
 side,

Where gentle Xanthus rolls his easy tide,
 With watery drops the chief they sprinkle round,
 Placed on the margin of the flowery ground. 510
 Raised on his knees he now ejects the gore ;
 Now faints anew, low sinking on the shore ;
 By fits he breathes, half views the fleeting skies,
 And seals again, by fits, his swimming eyes.

Soon as the Greeks the chief's retreat beheld,
 With double fury each invades the field. 516

Oilean Ajax first his javelin sped,
 Pierced by whose point the son of Enops bled—
 (Satnius the brave, whom beauteous Neis bore
 Amid her flocks, on Satnio's silver shore.) 520

Struck through the belly's rim, the warrior lies
 Supine, and shades eternal veil his eyes.

An arduous battle rose around the dead ;
 By turns the Greeks, by turns the Trojans bled.

Fired with revenge, Polydamas drew near, 525
 And at Prothoenor shook the trembling spear :
 The driving javelin through his shoulder thrust,
 He sinks to earth, and grasps the bloody dust.

“Lo! thus,” the victor cries, “we rule the field,
And thus their arms the race of Panthus wield: 530
From this unerring hand there flies no dart
But bathes its point within a Grecian heart.
Prompt on that spear to which thou owest thy fall,
Go, guide thy darksome steps to Pluto’s dreary
hall!”

He said, and sorrow touch’d each Argive breast:
The soul of Ajax burn’d above the rest. 536
As by his side the groaning warrior fell,
At the fierce foe he launch’d his piercing steel:
The foe reclining shunn’d the flying death;
But fate, Archilochus, demands thy breath: 540
Thy lofty birth no succour could impart;
The wings of death o’ertook thee on the dart.
Swift to perform Heaven’s fatal will it fled,
Full on the juncture of the neck and head,
And took the joint, and cut the nerves in twain: 545
The dropping head first tumbled to the plain.
So just the stroke, that yet the body stood
Erect, then roll’d along the sands in blood.

“Here, proud Polydamas, here turn thy eyes!”
The towering Ajax loud insulting cries: 550
“Say, is this chief, extended on the plain,
A worthy vengeance for Prothoenor slain?
Mark well his port; his figure, and his face,
Nor speak him vulgar, nor of vulgar race;
Some lines, methinks, may make his lineage known,
Antenor’s brother, or perhaps his son.” 556

He spake, and smiled severe, for well he knew
The bleeding youth: Troy sadden’d at the view.
But furious Acamas avenged his cause;
As Promachus his slaughter’d brother draws, 560
He pierced his heart: “Such fate attends you all,
Proud Argives! destined by our arms to fall.
Not Troy alone, but haughty Greece shall share
The toils, the sorrows, and the wounds of war.
Behold your Promachus deprived of breath, 565
A victim owed to my brave brother’s death.”

Not unappeased he enters Pluto's gate,
Who leaves a brother to revenge his fate.

Heart-piercing anguish struck the Grecian host,
But touch'd the breast of bold Peleus most ; 570
At the proud boaster he directs his course ;
The boaster flies, and shuns superior force.
But young Ilioneus received the spear ;
Ilioneus, his father's only care :

(Phorbas the rich, of all the Trojan train 575
Whom Hermes loved, and taught the arts of gain :)
Full in his eye the weapon chanced to fall,
And from the fibres scoop'd the rooted ball,
Drove through the neck, and hurl'd him to the plain :
He lifts his miserable arm in vain ! 580

Swift his broad falchion fierce Peneleus spread,
And from the spouting shoulders struck his head ;
To earth at once the head and helmet fly ;
The lance, yet sticking through the bleeding eye,
The victor seized ; and as aloft he shook 585
The gory visage, thus insulting spoke :

“Trojans ! your great Ilioneus behold !
Haste, to his father let the tale be told :
Let his high roofs resound with frantic wo,
Such as the house of Promachus must know ; 590
Let doleful tidings greet his mother's ear,
Such as to Promachus' sad spouse we bear ;
When we victorious shall to Greece return,
And the pale matron in our triumphs mourn.”

Dreadful he spoke, then toss'd the head on high ;
The Trojans hear, they tremble, and they fly : 596
Aghast they gaze around the fleet and wall,
And dread the ruin that impends on all.

Daughters of Jove ! that on Olympus shine,
Ye all-beholding, all-recording Nine ! 600
Oh say, when Neptune made proud Ilion yield,
What chief, what hero, first imbrued the field !
Of all the Grecians what immortal name,
And whose bless'd trophies will ye raise to fame ?

Thou first, great Ajax ! on the ensanguined plain,
Laid'st Hyrtius, leader of the Mysian train. 606
Phalces and Mermer Nestor's son o'erthrew.
Bold Merion Morys and Hippotion slew.
Strong Periphætes and Prothoon bled,
By 'Teucer's arrows mingled with the dead. 610
Pierced in the flank by Menelaus' steel,
His people's pastor, Hyperenor fell ;
Eternal darkness wrapp'd the warrior round,
And the fierce soul came rushing through the wound.
But stretch'd in heaps before Oileus' son, 615
Fall mighty numbers, mighty numbers run ;
Ajax the less, of all the Grecian race
Skill'd in pursuit, and swiftest in the chase.

BOOK XV

ARGUMENT

The fifth Battle at the Ships ; and the Acts of Ajax.

JUPITER, awaking, sees the Trojans repulsed from the trenches Hector in a swoon, and Neptune at the head of the Greeks : he is highly incensed at the artifice of Juno, who appeases him by her submissions ; she is then sent to Iris and Apollo—Juno, repairing to the assembly of the gods, attempts with extraordinary address to incense them against Jupiter ; in particular, she touches Mars with a violent resentment ; he is ready to take arms, but is prevented by Minerva—Iris and Apollo obey the orders of Jupiter—Iris commands Neptune to leave the battle, to which, after much reluctance and passion, he consents—Apollo reinspires Hector with vigour, brings him back to the battle, marches before him with his ægis, and turns the fortune of the fight—He breaks down great part of the Grecian wall ; the Trojans rush in, and attempt to fire the first line of the fleet, but are, as yet, repelled by the greater Ajax, with a prodigious slaughter.

Now in swift flight they pass the trench profound,
And many a chief lay gasping on the ground :
Then stopp'd and panted, where the chariots lie,
Fear on their cheek, and horror in their eye.
Meanwhile, awaken'd from his dream of love, 5
On Ida's summit sat imperial Jove :
Round the wide fields he cast a careful view,
There saw the Trojans fly, the Greeks pursue ;
These proud in arms, those scatter'd o'er the plain ;
And mid the war, the monarch of the main. 1
Not far, great Hector on the dust he spies,
(His sad associates round with weeping eyes,`

Ejecting blood, and panting yet for breath,
His senses wandering to the verge of death.
The god beheld him with a pitying look, 15
And thus, incensed, to fraudulent Juno spoke :

“ Oh thou, still adverse to the eternal will,
For ever studious in promoting ill !
Thy arts have made the godlike Hector yield,
And driven his conquering squadrons from the field.
Canst thou, unhappy in thy wiles ! withstand 21
Our power immense, and brave the almighty hand ?
Hast thou forgot, when bound and fix'd on high,
From the vast concave of the spangled sky,
I hung thee trembling in a golden chain, 25
And all the raging gods opposed in vain ?
Headlong I hurl'd them from the Olympian hall,
Stunn'd in the whirl, and breathless with the fall.
For godlike Hercules these deeds were done,
Nor seem'd the vengeance worthy such a son. 30
When, by thy wiles induced, fierce Boreas toss'd
The shipwreck'd hero on the Coan coast ;
Him through a thousand forms of death I bore,
And sent to Argos, and his native shore.
Hear this, remember, and our fury dread, 35
Nor pull the unwilling vengeance on thy head :
Lest arts and blandishments successless prove,
Thy soft deceits, and well-dissembled love.”

The Thunderer spoke : imperial Juno mourn'd,
And, trembling, these submissive words return'd : 40

“ By every oath that powers immortal ties,
The foodful earth, and all infolding skies ;
By thy black waves, tremendous Styx ! that flow
Through the drear realms of gliding ghosts below ;
By the dread honours of thy sacred head, 45
And that unbroken vow, our virgin bed !
Not by my arts the ruler of the main
Steeps Troy in blood, and ranges round the plain :
By his own ardour, his own pity sway'd,
To help his Greeks ; he fought, and disobey'd : 50

Else had thy Juno better counsels given,
And taught submission to the sire of heaven."

"Think'st thou with me, fair empress of the
skies?"

The immortal father with a smile replies ;
"Then soon the haughty sea god shall obey, 55

Nor dare to act, but when we point the way.

If truth inspires thy tongue, proclaim our will

To yon bright synod on the Olympian hill:

Our high decree let various Iris know,

And call the god that bears the silver bow. 60

Let her descend, and from the embattled plain

Command the sea god to his wat'ry reign:

While Phœbus hastes great Hector to prepare

To rise afresh, and once more wake the war, 65

His labouring bosom reinspires with breath,

And calls his senses from the verge of death.

Greece, chased by Troy ev'n to Achilles' fleet,

Shall fall by thousands at the hero's feet.

He, not untouch'd with pity, to the plain

Shall send Patroclus, but shall send in vain. 70

What youths he slaughters under Ilion's walls !

Ev'n my loved son, divine Sarpedon, falls !

Vanquish'd at last, by Hector's lance he lies,

Then, nor till then, shall great Achilles rise :

And lo ! that instant godlike Hector dies. 75

From that great hour the war's whole fortune turns,

Pallas assists, and lofty Ilion burns.

Not till that day shall Jove relax his rage,

Nor one of all the heavenly host engage

In aid of Greece. The promise of a god 80

I gave, and seal'd it with the almighty nod,

Achilles' glory to the stars to raise ;

Such was our word, and fate the word obeys."

The trembling queen, the almighty order given,
Swift from the Idæan summit shot to heaven. 85

As some wayfaring man, who wanders o'er

In thought a length of lands he trod before,

Sends forth his active mind from place to place,
Joins hill to dale, and measures space with space;
So swift flew Juno to the bless'd abodes, 90
If thought of man can match the speed of gods.
'There sat the powers in awful synod placed;
They bow'd, and made obeisance as she pass'd,
Through all the brazen dome : with goblets crown'd
They hail her queen ; the nectar streams around. 95
Fair Themis first presents the golden bowl,
And anxious asks what cares disturb her soul.

To whom the white-arm'd goddess thus replies :
" Enough thou know'st the tyrant of the skies,
Severely bent his purpose to fulfil, 100
Unmoved his mind, and unrestrain'd his will.
Go thou, the feasts of heaven attend thy call ;
Bid the crown'd nectar circle round the hall ;
But Jove shall thunder through the ethereal dome
Such stern decrees, such threaten'd woes to come,
As soon shall freeze mankind with dire surprise, 106
And damp the eternal banquets of the skies."

The goddess said, and sullen took her place ;
Blank horror sadden'd each celestial face.
To see the gathering grudge in every breast, 110
Smiles on her lips a spleenful joy express'd ;
While on her wrinkled front, and eyebrow bent,
Sat steadfast care, and lowering discontent.

Thus she proceeds : " Attend, ye powers above !
But know, 'tis madness to contest with Jove : 115
Supreme he sits ; and sees, in pride of sway,
Your vassal godheads grudgingly obey ;
Fierce in the majesty of power controls ;
Shakes all the thrones of heaven, and bends the poles.
Submiss immortals ; all he wills, obey : 120
And thou, great Mars, begin and show the way.
Behold Ascalaphus ! behold him die,
But dare not murmur, dare not vent a sigh ; not
Thy own loved boasted offspring lies o'erthrown,
If that loved boasted offspring be thy own." 125

Stern Mars, with anguish for his slaughter'd son,
Smote his rebelling breast, and fierce begun :

“ Thus then, immortals ! thus shall Mars obey ;
Forgive me, gods, and yield my vengeance way :
Descending first to yon forbidden plain, 130
The god of battles dares avenge the slain ;
Dares, though the thunder bursting o'er my head
Should hurl me blazing on those heaps of dead.”

With that, he gives command to Fear and Flight
To join his rapid coursers for the fight : 135
Then, grim in arms, with hasty vengeance flies ;
Arms, that reflect a radiance through the skies.
And now had Jove, by bold rebellion driven,
Discharged his wrath on half the host of heaven ;
But Pallas, springing through the bright abode, 140
Starts from her azure throne to calm the god :
Struck for the immortal race with timely fear,
From frantic Mars she snatch'd the shield and spear ;
Then the huge helmet lifting from his head,
Thus to the impetuous homicide she said : 145

“ By what wild passion, furious ! art thou toss'd ?
Striv'st thou with Jove ? thou art already lost.
Shall not the Thunderer's dread command restrain,
And was imperial Juno heard in vain ?
Back to the skies wouldst thou with shame be driven,
And in thy guilt involve the host of heaven ? 151
Ilion and Greece no more shall Jove engage ;
The skies would yield an ampler scene of rage,
Guilty and guiltless find an equal fate,
And one vast ruin whelm the Olympian state. 155
Cease then thy offspring's death unjust to call ;
Heroes as great have died, and yet shall fall.
Why should heaven's law with foolish man comply,
Exempted from the race ordain'd to die ?”

This menace fix'd the warrior to his throne ; 160
Sullen he cast, and curb'd the rising groan.
Then Juno call'd, Jove's orders to obey,
The winged Iris, and the god of day.

“Go wait the Thunderer’s will,” Saturnia cried,
“On yon tall summit of the fountful Ide : 165
There in the Father’s awful presence stand,
Receive and execute his dread command.”

She said, and sat : the god that gilds the day,
And various Iris, wing their airy way.
Swift as the wind, to Ida’s hills they came, 170
Fair nurse of fountains and of savage game.
There sat the Eternal ; he whose nod controls
The trembling world, and shakes the steady poles.
Veil’d in a mist of fragrance him they found,
With clouds of gold and purple circled round. 175
Well pleased the Thunderer saw their earnest care,
And prompt obedience to the queen of air ;
Then, while a smile serenest his awful brow,
Commands the goddess of the showery bow :

“Iris ! descend, and what we here ordain 180
Report to yon mad tyrant of the main.
Bid him from fights to his own deeps repair,
Or breathe from slaughter in the fields of air.
If he refuse, then let him timely weigh
Our elder birthright, and superior sway. 185
How shall his rashness stand the dire alarms,
If Heaven’s omnipotence descend in arms ?
Strives he with me, by whom his power was given ?
And is there equal to the Lord of heaven ?”

The Almighty spoke ; the goddess wing’d her flight
To sacred Ilion from the Idæan height. 191
Swift as the rattling hail, or fleecy snows,
Drive through the skies, when Boreas fiercely blows ;
So from the clouds descending Iris falls,
And to blue Neptune thus the goddess calls : 195

“Attend the mandate of the sire above,
In me behold the messenger of Jove :
He bids thee from forbidden wars repair
To thy own deeps, or to the fields of air.
Thus if refused, he bids thee timely weigh 200
His elder birthright, and superior sway.

How shall thy rashness stand the dire alarms,
 If Heaven's omnipotence descend in arms?
 Strivest thou with him, by whom all power is given?
 And art thou equal to the Lord of heaven?" 205

"What means the haughty sovereign of the skies?"
 The king of ocean thus, incensed, replies.

"Rule as he will his portion'd realms on high,
 No vassal god, nor of his train, am I.

Three brother deities from Saturn came, 210
 And ancient Rhea, earth's immortal dame:

Assign'd by lot, our triple rule we know:
 Infernal Pluto sways the shades below;

O'er the wide clouds, and o'er the starry plain,
 Ethereal Jove extends his high domain; 215

My court beneath the hoary waves I keep,
 And hush the roarings of the sacred deep:

Olympus, and this earth, in common lie;
 What claim has here the tyrant of the sky?

Far in the distant clouds let him control, 220
 And awe the younger brothers of the pole;

There to his children his commands be given,
 The trembling, servile, second race of heaven."

"And must I then," said she, "oh sire of floods!
 Bear this fierce answer to the king of gods? 225

Correct it yet, and change thy rash intent;
 A noble mind disdains not to repent.

To elder brothers guardian fiends are given,
 To scourge the wretch insulting them and Heaven."

"Great is the profit," thus the god rejoin'd, 230
 "When ministers are bless'd with prudent mind:

Warn'd by thy words, to powerful Jove I yield,
 And quit, though angry, the contended field.

Not but his threats with justice I disclaim,
 The same our honours, and our birth the same. 235

If yet, forgetful of his promise given
 To Hermes, Pallas, and the queen of heaven,

To favour Ilion, that perfidious place,
 He breaks his faith with half the ethereal race;

Give him to know, unless the Grecian train 240
Lay yon proud structures level with the plain,
Howe'er the offence by other gods be pass'd,
The wrath of Neptune shall for ever last."

Thus speaking, furious from the field he strode,
And plunged into the bosom of the flood. 245

The Lord of thunders from his lofty height
Beheld, and thus bespoke the source of light :

" Behold ! the god whose liquid arms are hurl'd
Around the globe, whose earthquakes rock the world,
Desists at length his rebel war to wage, 250
Seeks his own seas, and trembles at our rage ;
Else had my wrath, heaven's thrones all shaking
round,

Burn'd to the bottom of his seas profound ;
And all the gods that round old Saturn dwell
Had heard the thunders to the deeps of hell. 255

Well was the crime and well the vengeance spared,
Ev'n power immense had found such battle hard.
Go thou, my son ! the trembling Greeks alarm,
Shake my broad ægis on thy active arm :

Be godlike Hector thy peculiar care, 260

Swell his bold heart, and urge his strength to war :

Let Ilion conquer, till the Achaian train

Fly to their ships and Hellespont again :

Then Greece shall breathe from toils." The godhead
said ;

His will divine the son of Jove obey'd. 265

Not half so swift the sailing falcon flies,

That drives a turtle through the liquid skies,

As Phœbus, shooting from the Idæan brow,

Glides down the mountain to the plain below.

There Hector seated by the stream he sees, 270

His sense returning with the coming breeze :

Again his pulses beat, his spirits rise ;

Again his loved companions meet his eyes :

Jove thinking of his pains, they pass'd away.

To whom the god who gives the golden day : 275

“Why sits great Hector from the field so far?
What grief, what wound, withholds thee from the
war?”

The fainting hero, as the vision bright
Stood shining o’er him, half unseal’d his sight:

“What bless’d immortal, with commanding breath,
Thus wakens Hector from the sleep of death? 281
Has Fame not told, how, while my trusty sword
Bathed Greece in slaughter, and her battle gored,
The mighty Ajax with a deadly blow
Had almost sunk me to the shades below? 285
Ev’n yet, methinks, the gliding ghosts I spy,
And hell’s black horrors swim before my eye.”

To him Apollo: “Be no more dismay’d;
See, and be strong! the Thunderer sends thee aid.
Behold! thy Phœbus shall his arms employ, 290
Phœbus, propitious still to thee and Troy.
Inspire thy warriors then with manly force,
And to the ships impel thy rapid horse:
Ev’n I will make thy fiery coursers’ way,
And drive the Grecians headlong to the sea.” 295

Thus to bold Hector spoke the son of Jove,
And breathed immortal ardour from above.
As when the pamper’d steed, with reins unbound,
Breaks from his stall, and pours along the ground;
With ample strokes he rushes to the flood, 300
To bathe his sides, and cool his fiery blood;
His head, now freed, he tosses to the skies;
His mane dishevell’d o’er his shoulders flies;
He snuffs the females in the well known plain,
And springs, exulting, to his fields again: 305
Urged by the voice divine, thus Hector flew,
Full of the god: and all his hosts pursue.
As when the force of men and dogs combined
Invade the mountain goat, or branching hind;
Far from the hunter’s rage secure they lie 310
Close in the rock, not fated yet to die;
When lo! a lion shoots across the way!
They fly, at once the chasers and the prey:

So Greece, that late in conquering troops pursued,
 And mark'd their progress through the ranks in blood,
 Soon as they see the furious chief appear, 316
 Forget to vanish, and consent to fear.

Thoas with grief observed his dreadful course,
 Thoas, the bravest of the Ætolian force ;
 Skill'd to direct the javelin's distant flight, 320
 And bold to combat in the standing fight ;
 Not more in councils famed for solid sense,
 Than winning words and heavenly eloquence.
 "Gods ! what portent," he cried, "these eyes in-
 vades !

Lo ! Hector rises from the Stygian shades ! 325
 We saw him, late, by thundering Ajax kill'd :
 What god restores him to the frightened field ;
 And, not content that half of Greece lie slain,
 Pours new destruction on her sons again ?
 He comes not, Jove ! without thy powerful will ; 330
 Lo ! still he lives, pursues, and conquers still !
 Yet hear my counsel, and his worst withstand :
 The Greeks' main body to the fleet command ;
 But let the few whom brisker spirits warm
 Stand the first onset, and provoke the storm : 335
 Thus point your arms ; and, when such foes appear,
 Fierce as he is, let Hector learn to fear."

The warrior spoke, the listening Greeks obey,
 Thickening their ranks, and form a deep array.

Each Ajax, Teucer, Merion, gave command, 340
 The valiant leader of the Cretan band,
 And Marslike Meges : these the chiefs excite,
 Approach the foe, and meet the coming fight.
 Behind, unnumber'd multitudes attend,
 To flank the navy, and the shores defend. 345
 Full on the front the pressing Trojans bear,
 And Hector first came towering to the war.
 Phœbus himself the rushing battle led ;
 A veil of clouds involved his radiant head :
 High held before him, Jove's enormous shield 350
 Portentous shone, and shaded all the field ;

Vulcan to Jove the immortal gift consign'd,
To scatter hosts, and terrify mankind.
The Greeks expect the shock, and clamours rise
From different parts, and mingle with the skies. 355
Dire was the hiss of darts, by heroes flung,
And arrows leaping from the bowstring sung:
These drink the life of generous warriors slain;
Those guiltless fall, and thirst for blood in vain.
As long as Phœbus bore unmoved the shield, 360
Sat doubtful Conquest hovering o'er the field;
But when aloft he shakes it in the skies,
Shouts in their ears, and lightens in their eyes,
Deep horror seizes every Grecian breast,
Their force is humbled, and their fear confess'd. 365
So flies a herd of oxen, scatter'd wide,
No swain to guard them, and no day to guide,
When two fell lions from the mountain come,
And spread the carnage through the shady gloom.
Impending Phœbus pours around them fear, 370
And Troy and Hector thunder in the rear.
Heaps fall on heaps: the slaughter Hector leads;
First great Arcesilas, then Stichius bleeds;
One to the bold Bœotians ever dear,
And one Menestheus' friend, and famed compeer.
Medon and Iasus, Æneas sped; 376
This sprung from Phelus, and the Athenians led:
But hapless Medon from Oileus came;
Him Ajax honour'd with a brother's name,
Though born of lawless love: from home expell'd,
A banish'd man, in Phylace he dwell'd, 381
Press'd by the vengeance of an angry wife;
Troy ends, at last, his labours and his life.
Mecystes next, Polydamas o'erthrew;
And thee, brave Clonius, great Agenor slew. 385
By Paris, Deiochus inglorious dies,
Pierced through the shoulder as he basely flies.
Polites' arm laid Echius on the plain;
Stretch'd on one heap, the victors spoil the slain.

The Greeks dismay'd, confused, disperse or fall, 390
Some seek the trench, some skulk behind the wall.
While these fly trembling, others pant for breath,
And o'er the slaughter stalks gigantic Death.
On rush'd bold Hector, gloomy as the night ;
Forbids to plunder, animates the fight, 395
Points to the fleet : " For, by the gods, who flies,
Who dares but linger, by this hand he dies :
No weeping sister his cold eye shall close,
No friendly hand his funeral pyre compose.
Who stops to plunder in this signal hour, 400
The birds shall tear him, and the dogs devour."

Furious he said : the smarting scourge resounds ;
The coursers fly ; the smoking chariot bounds :
The hosts rush on ; loud clamours shake the shore ;
The horses thunder ; earth and ocean roar ! 405
Apollo, planted at the trench's bound,
Push'd at the bank ; down sunk the enormous mound ;
Roll'd in the ditch the heapy ruin lay ;
A sudden road ! a long and ample way.
O'er the dread fosse, a late impervious space, 410
Now steeds, and men, and cars tumultuous pass.
The wondering crowd the downward level trod ;
Before them flamed the shield, and march'd the god.
Then with his hand he shook the mighty wall ;
And lo ! the turrets nod, the bulwarks fall. 415
Easy, as when ashore an infant stands,
And draws imagined houses in the sands ;
The sportive wanton, pleased with some new play,
Sweeps the slight works and fashion'd domes away.
Thus vanish'd, at thy touch, the towers and walls :
The toil of thousands in a moment falls. 421

The Grecians gaze around with wild despair,
Confused, and weary all the powers with prayer ;
Exhort their men with praises, threats, commands,
And urge the gods with voices, eyes, and hands. 425
Experienced Nestor chief obtests the skies,
And weeps his country with a father's eyes :

“ Oh Jove ! if ever, on his native shore,
One Greek enrich'd thy shrine with offer'd gore ;
If e'er, in hope our country to behold, 431
We paid the fattest firstlings of the fold ;
If e'er thou sign'st our wishes with thy nod ;
Perform the promise of a gracious god !
This day, preserve our navies from the flame,
And save the relics of the Grecian name.” 435

Thus pray'd the sage : the Eternal gave consent,
And peals of thunder shake the firmament ;
Presumptuous Troy mistook the accepting sign,
And caught new fury at the voice divine.
As, when black tempests mix the seas and skies, 440
The roaring deeps in watery mountains rise,
Above the sides of some tall ship ascend,
Its womb they deluge, and its ribs they rend :
'Thus loudly roaring, and o'erpowering all,
Mount the thick Trojans up the Grecian wall : 445
Legions on legions from each side arise :
Thick sound the keels ; the storm of arrows flies.
Fierce on the ships above, the cars below,
These wield the mace, and those the javelin throw.

While thus the thunder of the battle raged, 450
And labouring armies round the works engaged ;
Still in the tent Patroclus sat, to tend
The good Eurypylus, his wounded friend.
He sprinkles healing balms, to anguish kind,
And adds discourse, the med'cine of the mind. 455
But when he saw, ascending up the fleet,
Victorious Troy ; then, starting from his seat,
With bitter groans his sorrows he express'd,
He wrings his hands, he beats his manly breast. 459
“ Though yet thy state require redress,” he cries,
“ Depart I must : what horrors strike mine eyes !
Charged with Achilles' high commands I go,
A mournful witness of this scene of wo :
I haste to urge him, by his country's care,
To rise in arms, and shine again in war. 465

Perhaps some favouring god his soul may bend ;
The voice is powerful of a faithful friend."

He spoke : and speaking, swifter than the wind
Sprung from the tent, and left the war behind.
The imbodied Greeks the fierce attack sustain, 470
But strive, though numerous, to repulse in vain !
Nor could the Trojans, through that firm array,
Force to the fleet and tents the impervious way.
As when a shipwright, with Palladian art,
Smooths the rough wood, and levels every part ; 475
With equal hand he guides his whole design,
By the just rule and the directing line :
The martial leaders, with like skill and care,
Preserved their line, and equal kept the war.
Brave deeds of arms through all the ranks were
tried, 480

And every ship sustain'd an equal tide.
At one proud bark, high towering o'er the fleet,
Ajax the great and godlike Hector meet ;
For one bright prize the matchless chiefs contend ;
Nor this the ships can fire, nor that defend ; 485
One kept the shore, and one the vessel trod ;
That fix'd as fate, this acted by a god.
The son of Clytius in his daring hand,
The deck approaching, shakes a flaming brand ;
But pierced by Telamon's huge lance expires : 490
Thundering he falls, and drops the extinguish'd fires.
Great Hector view'd him with a sad survey,
As stretch'd in dust before the stern he lay.
" Oh ! all of 'Trojan, all of Lycian race !
Stand to your arms, maintain this arduous space :
Lo ! where the son of royal Clytius lies : 496
Ah, save his arms, secure his obsequies !"

This said, his eager javelin sought the foe ;
But Ajax shunn'd the meditated blow.
Nor vainly yet the forceful lance was thrown ; 500
It stretch'd in dust unhappy Lycophron :
An exile long, sustain'd at Ajax' board,
A faithful servant to a foreign lord ;

In peace, in war, for ever at his side,
 Near his loved master, as he lived, he died. 505
 From the high poop he tumbles on the sand,
 And lies, a lifeless load, along the land.
 With anguish Ajax views the piercing sight,
 And thus inflames his brother to the fight :

“ Teucer, behold ! extended on the shore, 510
 Our friend, our loved companion ! now no more !
 Dear as a parent, with a parent’s care
 To fight our wars, he left his native air.
 This death deplored, to Hector’s rage we owe ;
 Revenge, revenge it on the cruel foe. 515
 Where are those darts on which the fates attend ?
 And where the bow which Phœbus taught to bend ?”

Impatient Teucer hastening to his aid,
 Before the chief his ample bow display’d ;
 The well-stored quiver on his shoulders hung : 520
 Then hissed his arrow, and the bowstring sung.
 Clytus, Pisenor’s son, renown’d in fame,
 (To thee, Polydamas ! an honour’d name,)
 Drove through the thickest of the embattled plains
 The startling steeds, and shook his eager reins. 525
 As all on glory ran his ardent mind,
 The pointed death arrests him from behind :
 Through his fair neck the thrilling arrow flies ;
 In youth’s first bloom reluctantly he dies.
 Hurl’d from the lofty seat, at distance far, 530
 The headlong coursers spurn his empty car ;
 Till sad Polydamas the steeds restrain’d,
 And gave, Astynous, to thy careful hand ;
 Then, fired to vengeance, rush’d amid the foe : 534
 Rage edged his sword, and strengthened every blow.

Once more bold Teucer, in his country’s cause,
 At Hector’s breast a chosen arrow draws ;
 And had the weapon found the destined way,
 Thy fall, great Trojan, had renown’d that day.
 But Hector was not doom’d to perish then : 540
 The all-wise Disposer of the fates of men,

Imperial Jove, his present death withstands ;
Nor was such glory due to Teucer's hands.
At its full stretch as the tough string he drew,
Struck by an arm unseen, it burst in two ; 545
Down dropp'd the bow : the shaft with brazen head
Fell innocent, and on the dust lay dead.
The astonish'd archer to great Ajax cries :
" Some god prevents our destined enterprise ;
Some god, propitious to the Trojan foe, 550
Has, from my arm unfailing, struck the bow.
And broke the nerve my hands had twined with art,
Strong to impel the flight of many a dart."

" Since Heaven commands it," Ajax made reply,
" Dismiss the bow, and lay thy arrows by ; 555
(Thy arms no less suffice the lance to wield ;)
And quit the quiver for the pond'rous shield.
In the first ranks indulge thy thirst of fame,
Thy brave example shall the rest inflame.
Fierce as they are, by long successes vain ; 560
To force our fleet, or ev'n a ship to gain,
Asks toil, and sweat, and blood : their utmost might
Shall find its match—no more ; 'tis ours to fight."

Then Teucer laid his faithless bow aside ;
The fourfold buckler o'er his shoulder tied ; 565
On his brave head a crested helm he placed,
With nodding horse-hair formidably graced :
A dart, whose point with brass refulgent shines,
The warrior wields, and his great brother joins.

This Hector saw, and thus express'd his joy : 570
' Ye troops of Lycia, Dardanus, and Troy !
Be mindful of yourselves, your ancient fame,
And spread your glory with the navy's flame.
Jove is with us ; I saw his hand, but now,
From the proud archer strike his vaunted bow. 575
Indulgent Jove ! how plain thy favours shine,
When happy nations bear the marks divine !
How easy, then, to see the sinking state
Of realms accursed, deserted, reprobate !

Such is the fate of Greece, and such is ours; 580
Behold, ye warriors, and exert your powers.
Death is the worst ; a fate which all must try ;
And for our country 'tis a bliss to die.

The gallant man, though slain in fight he be,
Yet leaves his nation safe, his children free; 585
Entails a debt on all the grateful state :
His own brave friends shall glory in his fate ;
His wife live honour'd ; all his race succeed ;
And late posterity enjoy the deed !”

This roused the soul in every Trojan breast. 590
The godlike Ajax next his Greeks address'd :

“How long, ye warriors of the Argive race !
(To generous Argos what a dire disgrace !)
How long on these cursed confines will ye lie,
Yet undetermined or to live or die ? 595

What hopes remain, what methods to retire,
If once your vessels catch the Trojan fire ?
Mark how the flames approach, how near they fall,
How Hector calls, and Troy obeys his call !
Not to the dance that dreadful voice invites, 600
It calls to death, and all the rage of fights.

'Tis now no time for wisdom or debates ;
To your own hands are trusted all your fates :
And better far in one decisive strife,
One day should end our labour, or our life, 605
Than keep this hard-got inch of barren sands,
Still press'd, and press'd by such inglorious hands.”

The listening Grecians feel their leader's flame,
And every kindling bosom pants for fame.
Then mutual slaughters spread on either side : 610
By Hector here the Phocian Schedius died ;
There, pierced by Ajax, sunk Laodamas,
Chief of the foot, of old Antenor's race.

Polydamas laid Otus on the sand,
The fierce commander of the Epeian band. 615
His lance bold Meges at the victor threw ;
The victor stooping, from the death withdrew ;

(That valued life, oh Phœbus! was thy care ;)
But Crœsmus' bosom took the flying spear :
His corpse fell bleeding on the slippery shore ; 620
His radiant arms triumphant Meges bore.
Dolops, the son of Lampus, rushes on,
Sprung from the race of old Laomedon,
And famed for prowess in a well-fought field ;
He pierced the centre of his sounding shield : 625
But Meges Phyleus' ample breastplate wore,
(Well known in fight on Selle's winding shore ;
For King Euphetes gave the golden mail,
Compact, and firm with many a jointed scale,)
Which oft, in cities storm'd, and battles won, 630
Had saved the father, and now saves the son.
Full at the Trojan's head he urged his lance,
Where the high plumes above the helmet dance,
New tinged with Tyrian die ; in dust below,
Shorn from the crest, the purple honours glow. 635
Meantime their fight the Spartan king survey'd,
And stood by Meges' side, a sudden aid ;
Through Dolops' shoulder urged his forceful dart,
Which held its passage through the panting heart,
And issued at his breast. With thundering sound
The warrior falls, extended on the ground. 641
In rush the conquering Greeks to spoil the slain :
But Hector's voice excites his kindred train ;
The hero most, from Hicetaon sprung,
Fierce Melanippus, gallant, brave, and young. 645
He, ere to Troy the Grecians cross'd the main,
Fed his large oxen on Percote's plain :
But when, oppress'd, his country claim'd his care,
Return'd to Ilion, and excell'd in war :
For this, in Priam's court he held his place, 650
Beloved no less than Priam's royal race.
Him Hector singled, as his troops he led,
And thus inflamed him, pointing to the dead :
" Lo, Melanippus ! lo where Dolops lies :
And is it thus our royal kinsman dies ? 655

O'ermatch'd he falls ; to two at once a prey,
 And lo ! they bear the bloody arms away !
 Come on ; a distant war no longer wage,
 But hand to hand thy country's foes engage :
 Till Greece at once, and all her glory end ; 660
 Or Ilion from her towery height descend,
 Heaved from the lowest stone ; and bury all
 In one sad sepulchre, one common fall."

Hector, this said, rush'd forward on the foes .
 With equal ardour Melanippus glows. 665
 Then Ajax thus : " Oh Greeks ! respect your fame,
 Respect yourselves, and learn an honest shame :
 Let mutual reverence mutual warmth inspire,
 And catch from breast to breast the noble fire.
 On valour's side the odds of combat lie, 670
 The brave live glorious, or lamented die ;
 The wretch that trembles in the field of fame
 Meets death, and, worse than death, eternal shame."

His generous sense he not in vain imparts ;
 It sunk, and rooted in the Grecian hearts : 675
 They join, they throng, they thicken at his call,
 And flank the navy with a brazen wall ;
 Shields touching shields, in order blaze above,
 And stop the Trojans, though impell'd by Jove.
 The fiery Spartan first, with loud applause, 680
 Warms the bold son of Nestor in his cause.
 " Is there," he said, " in arms a youth like you,
 So strong to fight, so active to pursue ?
 Why stand you distant, nor attempt a deed ?
 Lift the bold lance, and make some Trojan bleed."

He said ; and backward to the lines retired : 686
 Forth rush'd the youth, with martial fury fired,
 Beyond the foremost ranks ; his lance he threw,
 And round the black battalions cast his view.
 The troops of Troy recede with sudden fear, 690
 While the swift javelin hiss'd along in air.
 Advancing Melanippus met the dart
 With his bold breast, and felt it in his heart :

Thundering he falls ; his falling arms resound,
And his broad buckler rings against the ground. 695
The victor leaps upon his prostrate prize ;
Thus on a roe the well-breathed beagle flies,
And rends his side, fresh bleeding with the dart
The distant hunter sent into his heart.

Observing Hector to the rescue flew, 700
Bold as he was, Antilochus withdrew.

So when a savage, ranging o'er the plain,
Has torn the shepherd's dog, or shepherd swain,
While, conscious of the deed, he glares around,
And hears the gathering multitude resound, 705
Timely he flies the yet untasted food,
And gains the friendly shelter of the wood.

So fears the youth ; all Troy with shouts pursue,
While stones and darts in mingled tempests flew ;
But, enter'd in the Grecian ranks, he turns 710
His manly breast, and with new fury burns.

Now on the fleet the tides of Trojans drove,
Fierce to fulfil the stern decrees of Jove :
The sire of gods, confirming Thetis' prayer,
The Grecian ardour quench'd in deep despair ; 715
But lifts to glory Troy's prevailing bands,
Swells all their hearts, and strengthens all their
hands.

On Ida's top he waits with longing eyes,
To view the navy blazing to the skies ;
Then, nor till then, the scale of war shall turn, 720
The Trojans fly, and conquer'd Ilion burn.

These fates revolved in his almighty mind,
He raises Hector to the work design'd,
Bids him with more than mortal fury glow,
And drives him, like a lightning, on the foe. 725

So Mars, when human crimes for vengeance call,
Shakes his huge javelin, and whole armies fall.
Not with more rage a conflagration rolls,
Wraps the vast mountains, and involves the poles.
He foams with wrath ; beneath his gloomy brow
Like fiery meteors his red eyeballs glow : 731

The radiant helmet on his temples burns,
 Waves when he nods, and lightens as he turns:
 For Jove his splendour round the chief had thrown,
 And cast the blaze of both the hosts on one. 735
 Unhappy glories! for his fate was near,
 Due to stern Pallas, and Pelides' spear:
 Yet Jove deferr'd the death he was to pay,
 And gave what fate allow'd, the honours of a day!

Now all on fire for fame, his breast, his eyes 740
 Burn at each foe, and single every prize;
 Still at the closest ranks, the thickest fight,
 He points his ardour, and exerts his might.
 The Grecian phalanx, moveless as a tower,
 On all sides batter'd, yet resists his power: 745
 So some tall rock o'erhangs the hoary main,
 By winds assail'd, by billows beat in vain;
 Unmoved it hears, above, the tempest blow,
 And sees the watery mountains break below.
 Girt in surrounding flames, he seems to fall 750
 Like fire from Jove, and burst upon them all;
 Bursts as a wave that from the clouds impends,
 And swell'd with tempests on the ship descends:
 White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud
 Howl o'er the masts, and sing through every
 shroud: 755

Pale, trembling, tired, the sailors freeze with fears,
 And instant death on every wave appears.
 So pale the Greeks the eyes of Hector meet,
 The chief so thunders, and so shakes the fleet.
 As when a lion, rushing from his den, 760
 Amid the plain of some wide-water'd fen,
 (Where numerous oxen, as at ease they feed,
 At large expatiate o'er the ranker mead,)
 Leaps on the herd before the herdsman's eyes:
 The trembling herdsman far to distance flies: 765
 Some lordy bull (the rest dispersed and fled)
 He singles out; arrests, and lays him dead.
 Thus from the rage of Jovelike Hector flew
 All Greece in heaps; but one he seized and slew;

Mycenean Periphes, a mighty name, 770
 In wisdom great, in arms well known to fame ;
 The minister of stern Eurystheus' ire,
 Against Alcides, Copreus was his sire :
 'The son redeem'd the honours of the race,
 A son as generous as the sire was base ; 775
 O'er all his country's youth conspicuous far
 In every virtue, or of peace or war :
 But doom'd to Hector's stronger force to yield !
 Against the margin of his ample shield
 He struck his hasty foot : his heels up sprung ; 780
 Supine he fell ; his brazen helmet rung.
 On the fall'n chief the invading Trojan press'd,
 And plunged the pointed javelin in his breast.
 His circling friends, who strove to guard too late
 The unhappy hero, fled, or shared his fate. 785
 Chased from the foremost line, the Grecian train
 Now man the next, receding tow'rds the main ;
 Wedged in one body at the tents they stand,
 Wall'd round with sterns, a gloomy, desperate band.
 Now manly shame forbids the inglorious flight ; 790
 Now fear itself confines them to the fight
 Man courage breathes in man ; but Nestor most
 (The sage preserver of the Grecian host)
 Exhorts, adjures, to guard these utmost shores,
 And by their parents, by themselves, implores. 795
 "Oh friends ! be men : your generous breasts
 in flame
 With equal honour, and with mutual shame !
 Think of your hopes, your fortunes ; all the care
 Your wives, your infants, and your parents share :
 Think of each living father's reverend head : 800
 Think of each ancestor with glory dead
 Absent, by me they speak, by me they sue ;
 They ask their safety, and their fame, from you :
 The gods their fates on this one action lay,
 And all are lost, if you desert the day." 805
 He spoke, and round him breathed heroic fires ;
 Minerva seconds what the sage inspires.

The mist of darkness Jove around them threw
 She clear'd, restoring all the war to view;
 A sudden ray shot beaming o'er the plain, 810
 And show'd the shores, the navy, and the main:
 Hector they saw, and all who fly, or fight,
 The scene wide opening to the blaze of light.
 First of the field, great Ajax strikes their eyes,
 His port majestic, and his ample size: 815
 A ponderous mace, with studs of iron crown'd,
 Full twenty cubits long, he swings around;
 Nor fights like others fix'd to certain stands,
 But looks a moving tower above the bands:
 High on the decks, with vast gigantic stride, 820
 The godlike hero stalks from side to side.
 So when a horseman from the watery mead
 (Skill'd in the manage of the bounding steed)
 Drives four fair coursers, practised to obey,
 To some great city through the public way; 825
 Safe in his art, as side by side they run,
 He shifts his seat, and vaults from one to one;
 And now to this, and now to that he flies,
 Admiring numbers follow with their eyes.
 From ship to ship thus Ajax swiftly flew, 830
 No less the wonder of the warring crew.
 As furious Hector thunder'd threats aloud,
 And rush'd enraged before the Trojan crowd;
 Then swift invades the ships, whose beaky prores
 Lay rank'd contiguous on the bending shores: 835
 So the strong eagle from his airy height,
 Who marks the swans' or cranes' imbodied flight,
 Stoops down impetuous, while they light for food,
 And, stooping, darkens with his wings the flood.
 Jove leads him on with his almighty hand, 840
 And breathes fierce spirits in his following band.
 The warring nations meet, the battle roars,
 Thick beats the combat on the sounding prores.
 Thou wouldst have thought, so furious was their
 fire,
 No force could tame them, and no toil could tire;

As if new vigour from new fights they won, 846
And the long battle was but then begun.
Greece, yet unconquer'd, kept alive the war,
Secure of death, confiding in despair;
Troy in proud hopes already view'd the main 850
Bright with the blaze, and red with heroes slain :
Like strength is felt from hope and from despair,
And each contends, as his were all the war.
'Twas thou, bold Hector ! whose resistless hand
First seized a ship on that contested strand ; 855
The same which dead Protesilaus bore,
The first that touch'd the unhappy Trojan shore :
For this in arms the warring nations stood,
And bathed their generous breasts with mutual
blood.

No room to poise the lance or bend the bow ; 860
But hand to hand, and man to man they grow :
Wounded they wound ; and seek each other's hearts
With falchions, axes, swords, and shorten'd darts.
The falchions ring, shields rattle, axes sound,
Swords flash in air, or glitter on the ground ; 865
With streaming blood the slippery shores are died,
And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide.

Still raging Hector with his ample hand
Grasps the high stern, and gives this loud command :
“ Haste, bring the flames ! the toil of ten long
years 870

Is finish'd ! and the day desired appears !
This happy day with acclamations greet,
Bright with destruction of yon hostile fleet.
The coward counsels of a timorous throng
Of reverend dotards check'd our glory long : 875
Too long Jove lull'd us with lethargic charms,
But now in peals of thunder calls to arms :
In this great day he crowns our full desires,
Wakes all our force, and seconds all our fires.”

He spoke—the warriors, at his fierce command,
Pour a new deluge on the Grecian band. 881

Ev'n Ajax paused, (so thick the javelins fly,)
Stepp'd back, and doubted or to live or die.
Yet where the oars are placed he stands to wait
What chief approaching dares attempt his fate : 885
Ev'n to the last his naval charge defends,
Now shakes his spear, now lifts, and now protends ;
Ev'n yet, the Greeks with piercing shouts inspires,
Amid attacks, and deaths, and darts, and fires :

“Oh friends! oh heroes! names for ever dear, 890
Once sons of Mars, and thunderbolts of war!
Ah! yet be mindful of your own renown,
Your great forefathers' virtues and your own.
What aids expect you in this utmost strait?
What bulwarks rising between you and fate? 895
No aids, no bulwarks, your retreat attend;
No friends to help, no city to defend:
This spot is all you have, to lose or keep;
There stands the 'Trojans, and here rolls the deep.
'Tis hostile ground you tread; your native lands 900
Far, far from hence: your fates are in your hands.”

Raging he spoke; nor further wastes his breath,
But turns his javelin to the work of death.
Whate'er bold Trojan arm'd his daring hands,
Against the sable ships, with flaming brands; 905
So well the chief his naval weapon sped,
The luckless warrior at his stern lay dead:
Full twelve, the boldest, in a moment fell,
Sent by great Ajax to the shades of hell.

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT.

The sixth Battle: the Acts and Death of Patroclus.

PATROCLUS, in pursuance of the request of Nestor in the eleventh book, entreats Achilles to suffer him to go to the assistance of the Greeks with Achilles' troops and armour—He agrees to it, but at the same time charges him to content himself with rescuing the fleet, without further pursuit of the enemy—The armour, horses, soldiers, and officers of Achilles are described—Achilles offers a libation for the success of his friend, after which Patroclus leads the Myrmidons to battle—The Trojans, at the sight of Patroclus in Achilles' armour, taking him for that hero, are cast into the utmost consternation: he beats them off from the vessels—Hector himself flies—Sarpedon is killed, though Jupiter is averse to his fate—Several other particulars of the battle are described; in the heat of which, Patroclus, neglecting the orders of Achilles, pursues the foe to the walls of Troy; where Apollo repulses and disarms him, Euphorbus wounds him, and Hector kills him: which concludes the book.

So warr'd both armies on the ensanguined shore,
While the black vessels smoked with human gore.
Meantime Patroclus to Achilles flies;
The streaming tears fall copious from his eyes;
Not faster trickling to the plains below, 5
From the tall rock the sable waters flow.
Divine Pelides, with compassion moved,
Thus spoke, indulgent to his best beloved:
“Patroclus, say, what grief thy bosom bears,
That flows so fast in these unmanly tears? 10
No girl, no infant whom the mother keeps
From her loved breast, with fonder passion weeps;

Not more the mother's soul that infant warms,
Clung to her knees, and reaching at her arms,
Than thou hast mine ! Oh tell me, to what end 15
Thy melting sorrows thus pursue thy friend ?

“Griev'st thou for me, or for my martial band ?
Or come sad tidings from our native land ?
Our fathers live, (our first, most tender care,)
Thy good Menœtius breathes the vital air, 20
And hoary Peleus yet extends his days,
Pleased in their age to hear their children's praise.

“Or may some meaner cause thy pity claim ?
Perhaps yon relics of the Grecian name,
Doom'd in their ships to sink by fire and sword, 25
And pay the forfeit of their haughty lord ?
Whate'er the cause, reveal thy sacred care,
And speak those sorrows which a friend would
share.”

A sigh, that instant, from his bosom broke,
Another follow'd, and Patroclus spoke : 30

“Let Greece at length with pity touch thy breast,
Thyself a Greek ; and, once, of Greeks the best !
Lo ! every chief that might her fate prevent
Lies pierced with wounds, and bleeding in his tent.
Eurypylus, Tydides, Atreus' son, 35
And wise Ulysses, at the navy groan,
More for their country's wounds, than for their own.
Their pain, soft arts of pharmacy can ease,
Thy breast alone no lenitives appease.

“May never rage like thine my soul enslave, 40
Oh great in vain ! unprofitably brave !
Thy country slighted in her last distress,
What friend, what man, from thee shall hope re-
dress ?

No—men unborn, and ages yet behind,
Shall curse that fierce, that unforgiving mind. 45

“Oh man unpitying ! if of man thy race ;
But sure thou spring'st not from a soft embrace,
Nor ever amorous hero caused thy birth,
Nor ever tender goddess brought thee forth.

Some rugged rock's hard entrails gave thee form, 50
And raging seas produced thee in a storm,
A soul well suiting that-tempestuous kind,
So rough thy manners, so untamed thy mind.

“If some dire oracle thy breast alarm,
If aught from Jove, or Thetis, stop thy arm, 55
Some beam of comfort yet on Greece may shine,
If I but lead the Myrmidonian line:
Clad in thy dreadful arms if I appear,
Proud Troy shall tremble, and desert the war:
Without thy person Greece shall win the day, 60
And thy mere image chase her foes away.
Press'd by fresh forces, her o'erlabour'd train
Shall quit the ships, and Greece respire again.”

Thus, blind to fate! with supplicating breath,
Thou begg'st his arms, and in his arms thy death.
Unfortunately good! a boding sigh 66
Thy friend return'd; and with it this reply:

“Patroclus! thy Achilles knows no fears;
Nor words from Jove, nor oracles he hears;
Nor aught a mother's caution can suggest: 70
The tyrant's pride lies rooted in my breast.
My wrongs, my wrongs, my constant thought en-
gage;

Those, my sole oracles, inspire my rage.
I made him tyrant; gave him power to wrong
Ev'n me: I felt it; and shall feel it long. 75
The maid, my black-eyed maid, he forced away,
Due to the toils of many a well-fought day;
Due to my conquest of her father's reign;
Due to the votes of all the Grecian train.
From me he forced her; me, the bold and brave; 80
Disgraced, dishonour'd, like the meanest slave.
But bear we this—the wrongs I grieve are past;
'Tis time our fury should relent at last:
I fix'd its date; the day I wish'd appears:
Now Hector to my ships his battle bears, 85
The flames my eyes, the shouts invade my ears.

Go, then, Patroclus! court fair honour's charms
In Troy's famed fields, and in Achilles' arms :
Lead forth my martial Myrmidons to fight :
Go, save the fleets, and conquer in my right. 90
See the thin relics of their baffled band
At the last edge of yon deserted land !
Behold all Ilion on their ships descends ;
How the cloud blackens, how the storm impends !
It was not thus, when, at my sight amazed, 95
Troy saw, and trembled, as this helmet blazed .
Had not the injurious king our friendship lost,
Yon ample trench had buried half her host.
No camps, no bulwarks, now the Trojans fear ;
Those are not dreadful, no Achilles there : 100
No longer flames the lance of 'Tydeus' son ;
No more your general calls his heroes on :
Hector, alone, I hear ; his dreadful breath
Commands your slaughter, or proclaims your death.
Yet now, Patroclus, issue to the plain ; 105
Now save the ships, the rising fires restrain,
And give the Greeks to visit Greece again.
But heed my words, and mark a friend's command,
Who trusts his fame and honours in thy hand,
And from thy deeds expects the Achaian host 110
Shall render back the beauteous maid he lost :
Rage uncontroll'd through all the hostile crew,
But touch not Hector, Hector is my due.
'Though Jove in thunder should command the war,
Be just, consult my glory, and forbear. 115
'The fleet once saved, desist from farther chase,
Nor lead to Ilion's wall the Grecian race :
Some adverse god thy rashness may destroy ;
Some god, like Phœbus, ever kind to Troy.
Let Greece, redeem'd from this destructive strait, 120
Do her own work ; and leave the rest to fate.
Oh! would to all the immortal powers above,
Apollo, Pallas, and almighty Jove !
That not one Trojan might be left alive,
And not a Greek of all the race survive ; 125

Might only we the vast destruction shun,
And only we destroy the accursed town!"

Such conference held the chiefs; while, on the
strand,

Great Jove with conquest crown'd the Trojan band.
Ajax no more the sounding storm sustain'd, 130
So thick the darts an iron tempest rain'd :
On his tired arm the weighty buckler hung ;
His hollow helm with falling javelins rung :
His breath, in quick, short pantings, comes and goes ;
And painful sweat from all his members flows : 135
Spent and o'erpower'd, he barely breathes at most ;
Yet scarce an army stirs him from his post :
Dangers on dangers all around him grow,
And toil to toil, and wo succeeds to wo.

Say, muses, throned above the starry frame, 140
How first the navy blazed with Trojan flame ?

Stern Hector waved his sword ; and standing near
Where furious Ajax plied his ashen spear,
Full on the lance a stroke so justly sped,
That the broad falchion lopp'd its brazen head : 145
His pointless spear the warrior shakes in vain ;
The brazen head falls sounding on the plain.
Great Ajax saw, and own'd the hand divine,
Confessing Jove, and trembling at the sign. 149
Warn'd, he retreats. Then swift from all sides pour
The hissing brands ; thick streams the fiery shower ;
O'er the high stern the curling volumes rise,
And sheets of rolling smoke involve the skies.

Divine Achilles view'd the rising flames,
And smote his thigh, and thus aloud exclaims : 155
"Arm, arm, Patroclus ! Lo, the blaze aspires !
The glowing ocean reddens with the fires.
Arm, ere our vessels catch the spreading flame ;
Arm, ere the Grecians be no more a name :
I haste to bring the troops." The hero said ; 160
The friend with ardour and with joy obey'd.
He cased his limbs in brass ; and first around
His manly legs with silver buckles bound

The clasping greaves ; then to his breast applies
 The flaming cuirass, of a thousand dies : 165
 Emblazed with studs of gold his falchion shone
 In the rich belt, as in a starry zone :
 Achilles' shield his ample shoulders spread,
 Achilles' helmet nodded o'er his head :
 Adorn'd in all his terrible array, 170
 He flash'd around intolerable day.
 Alone, untouch'd, Pelides' javelin stands,
 Not to be poised but by Pelides' hands ;
 From Pelion's shady brow the plant entire
 Old Chiron rent, and shaped it for his sire ; 175
 Whose son's great arm alone the weapon wields,
 The death of heroes, and the dread of fields.

Then brave Automedon (an honour'd name,
 The second to his lord in love and fame,
 In peace his friend, and partner of the war) 180
 The winged coursers harness'd to the car ;
 Xanthus and Balius, of immortal breed,
 Sprung from the wind, and like the wind in speed ;
 Whom the wing'd harpy, swift Podarge, bore,
 By Zephyr pregnant on the breezy shore : 185
 Swift Pegasus was added to their side,
 (Once great Aetion's, now Achilles' pride,)
 Who, like in strength, in swiftness, and in grace,
 A mortal courser, match'd the immortal race.

Achilles speeds from tent to tent, and warms 190
 His hardy Myrmidons to blood and arms,
 All breathing death, around their chief they stand,
 A grim, terrific, formidable band :
 Grim as voracious wolves, that seek the springs
 When scalding thirst their burning bowels wrings ; 195
 When some tall stag, fresh slaughter'd in the wood,
 Has drench'd their wide insatiate throats with blood,
 To the black fount they rush, a hideous throng,
 With paunch distended, and with lolling tongue : 199
 Fire fills their eye, their black jaws belch the gore,
 And, gorged with slaughter, still they thirst for more.

Like furious rush'd the Myrmidonian crew,
Such their dread strength, and such their deathful
view.

High in the midst the great Achilles stands,
Directs their order, and the war commands. 205
He, loved of Jove, had launch'd for Ilion's shores
Full fifty vessels, mann'd with fifty oars :
Five chosen leaders the fierce bands obey,
Himself supreme in valour as in sway.

First march'd Menestheus, of celestial birth, 210
Derived from thee, whose waters wash the earth,
Divine Sperchius ! Jove-descending flood !
A mortal mother mixing with a god.
Such was Menestheus, but miscall'd by fame
The son of Borus, that espoused the dame. 215

Eudorus next ; whom Polymele the gay,
Famed in the graceful dance, produced to Day.
Her, sly Cyllenius loved, on her would gaze,
As swift of step she form'd the running maze :
To her high chamber from Diana's quire 220
The god pursued her, urged, and crown'd his fire.
The son confess'd his father's heavenly race,
And heir'd his mother's swiftness in the chase.
Strong Echeclus, bless'd in all those charms
That pleased a god, succeeded to her arms ; 225
Not conscious of those loves long hid from fame,
With gifts of price he sought and won the dame :
Her secret offspring to her sire she bare ;
Her sire caress'd him with a parent's care.

Pisander follow'd ; matchless in his art 230
To wing the spear or aim the distant dart ;
No hand so sure of all the Emathian line,
Or if a surer, great Patroclus ! thine.

The fourth by Phœnix's grave command was
graced ;
Laerces' valiant offspring led the last. 235

Soon as Achilles with superior care
Had call'd the chiefs, and order'd all the war,

This stern remembrance to his troops he gave:
“Ye far-famed Myrmidons, ye fierce and brave!
Think with what threats you dared the Trojan
throng, 240

Think what reproach these ears endured so long.
‘Stern son of Peleus,’ thus you used to say,
While, restless, raging in your ships you lay,
‘Oh, nursed with gall, unknowing how to yield!
Whose rage defrauds us of so famed a field, 245
If that dire fury must for ever burn,
What make we here? Return; ye chiefs, return!’
Such were your words. Now, warriors, grieve no
more;

Lo there the Trojans! bathe your swords in gore!
This day shall give you all your soul demands; 250
Glut all your hearts, and weary all your hands!”

Thus while he roused the fire in every breast,
Close, and more close, the listening cohorts press’d;
Ranks wedged in ranks; of arms a steely ring
Still grows, and spreads, and thickens round the
king. 255

As when a circling wall the builder forms,
Of strength defensive against winds and storms,
Compacted stones the thickening work compose,
And round him wide the rising structure grows: 259
So helm to helm, and crest to crest they throng,
Shield urged on shield, and man drove man along;
Thick, undistinguish’d plumes, together join’d,
Float in one sea, and wave before the wind.

Far o’er the rest, in glittering pomp appear,
There bold Automedon, Patroclus here: 265
Brothers in arms, with equal fury fired;
Two friends, two bodies with one soul inspired.

But mindful of the gods, Achilles went
To the rich coffer in his shady tent;
There lay on heaps his various garments roll’d, 270
And costly furs, and carpets stiff with gold—
(The presents of the silver-footed dame.)
From thence he took a bowl of antique frame,

Which never man had stain'd with ruddy wine,
 Nor raised in offerings to the powers divine, 275
 But Peleus' son; and Peleus' son to none
 Had raised in offerings but to Jove alone.

This tinged with sulphur, sacred first to flame,
 He purged: and wash'd it in the running stream:
 Then cleansed his hands; and fixing for a space 280
 His eyes on heaven, his feet upon the place
 Of sacrifice, the purple draught he pour'd
 Forth in the midst; and thus the god implored:

“O thou Supreme! high throned all height above!
 O great Pelasgic, Dodonæan Jove! 285

Who mid surrounding frosts, and vapours chill,
 Presid'st on bleak Dodona's vocal hill;
 (Whose groves, the Selli, race austere! surround,
 Their feet unwash'd, their slumbers on the ground;
 Who hear, from rustling oaks, thy dark decrees; 290
 And catch the fates, low whisper'd in the breeze;)
 Hear, as of old! Thou gav'st, at Thetis' prayer,
 Glory to me, and to the Greeks despair.

Lo, to the dangers of the fighting field
 The best, the dearest of my friends, I yield: 295
 Though still determined, to my ships confined,
 Patroclus gone, I stay but half behind.

Oh, be his guard thy providential care,
 Confirm his heart, and string his arm to war:
 Press'd by his single force, let Hector see 300
 His fame in arms not owing all to me.

But when the fleets are saved from foes and fire,
 Let him with conquest and renown retire;
 Preserve his arms, preserve his social train,
 And safe return him to these eyes again!” 305

Great Jove consents to half the chief's request,
 But Heaven's eternal doom denies the rest:
 To free the fleet was granted to his prayer
 His safe return the winds dispersed in air.
 Back to his tent the stern Achilles flies, 310
 And waits the combat with impatient eyes.

Meanwhile the troops, beneath Patroclus' care,
Invade the Trojans and commence the war.
As wasps, provoked by children in their play,
Pour from their mansions by the broad highway;
In swarms the guiltless traveller engage, 316
Whet all their stings, and call forth all their rage;
All rise in arms, and with a general cry
Assert their waxen domes and buzzing progeny:
Thus from the tents the fervent legion swarms, 320
So loud their clamour, and so keen their arms.
Their rising rage Patroclus' breath inspires,
Who thus inflames them with heroic fires:

“Oh warriors, partners of Achilles' praise!
Be mindful of your deeds in ancient days: 325
Your godlike master let your acts proclaim,
And add new glories to his mighty name.
Think your Achilles sees you fight: be brave,
And humble the proud monarch whom you save.”

Joyful they heard, and kindling as he spoke, 330
Flew to the fleet, involved in fire and smoke.
From shore to shore the doubling shouts resound,
The hollow ships return a deeper sound.
The war stood still, and all around them gazed,
When great Achilles' shining armour blazed: 335
Troy saw, and thought the dread Achilles nigh;
At once they see, they tremble, and they fly.

Then first thy spear, divine Patroclus! flew,
Where the war raged, and where the tumult grew:
Close to the stern of that famed ship, which bore
Unbless'd Protesilaus to Ilion's shore, 341
The great Pæonian, bold Pyræchmes, stood—
(Who led his bands from Axius' winding flood:)
'This shoulder blade receives the fatal wound;
The groaning warrior pants upon the ground. 345
His troops, that see their country's glory slain,
Fly diverse, scatter'd o'er the distant plain.
Patroclus' arm forbids the spreading fires,
And from the half-burn'd ship proud Troy retires:

Clear from the smoke the joyful navy lies ; 350
In heaps on heaps the foe tumultuous flies ;
Triumphant Greece her rescued decks ascends,
And loud acclaim the starry region rends.

So when thick clouds enwrap the mountain's head,
O'er heaven's expanse like one black ceiling spread ;
Sudden, the Thunderer, with a flashing ray, 356
Bursts through the darkness, and lets down the day :
The hills shine out, the rocks in prospect rise,
And streams, and vales, and forests, strike the eyes ;
The smiling scene wide opens to the sight, 360
And all the unmeasured ether flames with light.

But 'Troy repulsed, and scatter'd o'er the plains,
Forced from the navy, yet the fight maintains.
Now every Greek some hostile hero slew ;
But still the foremost bold Patroclus flew : 365
As Areilycus had turn'd him round,
Sharp in his thigh he felt the piercing wound ;
The brazen-pointed spear, with vigour thrown,
The thigh transfix'd, and broke the brittle bone :
Headlong he fell. Next, Thoas, was thy chance ;
Thy breast, unarm'd, received the Spartan lance. 371
Phylides' dart, as Amphiclus drew nigh,
His blow prevented, and transpierced his thigh,
Tore all the brawn, and rent the nerves away :
In darkness and in death the warrior lay. 375

In equal arms two sons of Nestor stand,
And two bold brothers of the Lycian band :
By great Antilochus, Atymnius dies ;
Pierced in the flank, lamented youth ! he lies.
Kind Maris, bleeding in his brother's wound, 380
Defends the breathless carcass on the ground.
Furious he flies, his murderer to engage,
But godlike Thrasymed prevents his rage ;
Between his arm and shoulder aims a blow ;
His arm falls spouting on the dust below : 385
He sinks, with endless darkness cover'd o'er,
And vents his soul, effused with gushing gore.

Slain by two brothers, thus two brothers bleed,
Sarpedon's friends, Amisodarus' seed;
Amisodarus, who, by furies led, 390
The bane of men, abhorr'd Chimæra bred:
Skill'd in the dart in vain, his sons expire,
And pay the forfeit of their guilty sire.

Stopp'd in the tumult Cleobulus lies,
Beneath Oileus' arm, a living prize; 395
A living prize not long the Trojan stood,
The thirsty falchion drank his reeking blood:
Plunged in his throat the smoking weapon lies,
Black death, and fate unpitying, seal his eyes.

Amid the ranks, with mutual thirst of fame, 400
Lycon the brave, and fierce Peneleus came;
In vain their javelins at each other flew,
Now, met in arms, their eager swords they drew.
On the plumed crest of his Bæotian foe
The daring Lycon aim'd a noble blow: 405
The sword broke short; but his, Peneleus sped
Full on the juncture of the neck and head:
The head, divided by a stroke so just,
Hung by the skin; the body sunk to dust.

O'ertaken Neamas by Merion bleeds, 410
Pierced through the shoulder as he mounts his
steeds;

Back from the car he tumbles to the ground;
His swimming eyes eternal shades surround.

Next Erymas was doom'd his fate to feel;
His open'd mouth received the Cretan steel: 415
Beneath the brain the point a passage tore,
Crash'd the thin bones, and drown'd the teeth in
gore:

His mouth, his eyes, his nostrils, pour a flood;
He sobs his soul out in the gush of blood.

As when the flocks, neglected by the swain, 420
(Or kids, or lambs,) lie scatter'd o'er the plain,
A troop of wolves the unguarded charge survey,
And rend the trembling, unresisting prey:

Thus on the foe the Greeks impetuous came ;
Troy fled, unmindful of her former fame. 425

But still at Hector godlike Ajax aim'd,
Still pointed at his breast, his javelin flamed.
The Trojan chief, experienced in the field,
O'er his broad shoulders spread the massy shield,
Observed the storm of darts the Grecians pour, 430
And on his buckler caught the ringing shower.
He sees for Greece the scale of conquest rise,
Yet stops, and turns, and saves his loved allies.

As when the hand of Jove a tempest forms,
And rolls the cloud to blacken heaven with storms,
Dark o'er the fields the ascending vapour flies, 436
And shades the sun, and blots the golden skies :
So from the ships, along the dusky plain,
Dire flight and terror drove the Trojan train.
Ev'n Hector fled ; through heaps of disarray 440
The fiery coursers forced their lord away :
While far behind his Trojans fall confused ;
Wedged in the trench, in one vast carnage bruised :
Chariots on chariots roll : the clashing spokes
Shock ; while the madding steeds break short their
yokes : 445

In vain they labour up the steepy mound ;
Their charioteers lie foaming on the ground.
Fierce on the rear, with shouts, Patroclus flies :
Tumultuous clamour fills the fields and skies ;
Thick drifts of dust involve their rapid flight ; 450
Clouds rise on clouds, and heaven is snatch'd from
sight.

The affrighted steeds, their dying lords cast down,
Scour o'er the fields, and stretch to reach the town.
Loud o'er the rout was heard the victor's cry, 454
Where the war bleeds, and where the thickest die,
Where horse, and arms, and chariots, lie o'erthrown,
And bleeding heroes under axles groan.
No stop, no check, the steeds of Peleus knew ;
From bank to bank the immortal coursers flew,

High bounding o'er the fosse : the whirling car 460
 Smokes through the ranks, o'ertakes the flying war,
 And thunders after Hector : Hector flies ;
 Patroclus shakes his lance ; but fate denies.

Not with less noise, with less impetuous force,
 The tide of Trojans urge their desperate course,
 Than when in autumn Jove his fury pours, 466
 And earth is loaded with incessant showers :
 (When guilty mortals break the eternal laws,
 Or judges bribed betray the righteous cause :)
 From their deep beds he bids the river rise, 470
 And opens all the floodgates of the skies :
 The impetuous torrents from their hills obey ;
 Whole fields are drown'd, and mountains swept
 away :

Loud roars the deluge till it meets the main ;
 And trembling man sees all his labours vain. 475

And now the chief, the foremost troops repell'd,
 Back to the ships his destined progress held,
 Bore down half Troy in his resistless way,
 And forced the routed ranks to stand the day.
 Between the space where silver Simois flows, 480
 Where lay the fleets, and where the rampires rose,
 All grim in dust and blood, Patroclus stands,
 And turns the slaughter on the conquering bands.
 First Pronous died beneath his fiery dart,
 Which pierced below the shield his valiant heart.
 Thestor was next ; who saw the chief appear, 486
 And fell the victim of his coward fear :
 Shrank up he sat, with wild and haggard eye,
 Nor stood to combat, nor had force to fly.
 Patroclus mark'd him as he shunn'd the war, 490
 And with unmanly trembling shook the car,
 And dropp'd the flowing reins. Him 'tween the jaws
 The javelin sticks, and from the chariot draws.
 As on a rock that overhangs the main,
 An angler, studious of the line and cane, 495
 Some mighty fish draws panting to the shore ;
 Not with less ease the barbed javelin bore

The gaping dastard : as the spear was shook,
He fell, and life his heartless breast forsook.

Next on Eryalus he flies ; a stone, 500
Large as a rock, was by his fury thrown :
Full on his crown the pond'rous fragment flew,
And burst the helm, and cleft the head in two :
Prone on the ground the breathless warrior fell,
And death involved him with the shades of hell. 505
Then low in dust Epaltes, Echius, lie ;
Ipheas, Evippus, Polymelus, die ;
Amphoterus and Erymas succeed ;
And last Tlepolemus and Pyres bleed.
Where'er he moves, the growing slaughters spread
In heaps on heaps ; a monument of dead. 511

When now Sarpedon his brave friends beheld
Groveling in dust, and gasping on the field,
With this reproach his flying host he warms :
" Oh stain to honour ! oh disgrace to arms ! 515
Forsake, inglorious, the contended plain ;
This hand, unaided, shall the war sustain :
The task be mine, this hero's strength to try,
Who mows whole troops, and makes an army fly."
He spake ; and speaking, leaps from off the car : 520
Patroclus lights, and sternly waits the war.
As when two vultures on the mountain's height
Stoop with resounding pinions to the fight ;
They cuff, they tear, they raise a screaming cry ;
The desert echoes, and the rocks reply : 525
The warriors thus opposed in arms, engage
With equal clamours, and with equal rage.

Jove view'd the combat, whose event foreseen,
He thus bespoke his sister and his queen :
" The hour draws on the destinies ordain 530
My godlike son shall press the Phrygian plain :
Already on the verge of death he stands,
His life is owed to fierce Patroclus' hands.
What passions in a parent's breast debate !
Say, shall I snatch him from impending fate, 535

And send him safe to Lycia, distant far
From all the dangers and the toils of war;
Or to his doom my bravest offspring yield,
And fatten with celestial blood the field?"

Then thus the goddess with the radiant eyes : 540
"What words are these, oh sovereign of the skies?
Short is the date prescribed to mortal man :
Shall Jove, for one, extend the narrow span,
Whose bounds were fix'd before his race began?
How many sons of gods, foredoom'd to death, 545
Before proud Ilion must resign their breath!
Were thine exempt, debate would rise above,
And murmuring powers condemn their partial Jove.
Give the bold chief a glorious fate in fight;
And when the ascending soul has wing'd her flight,
Let Sleep and Death convey, by thy command, 551
The breathless body to his native land.
His friends and people, to his future praise,
A marble tomb and pyramid shall raise,
And lasting honours to his ashes give ; 555
His fame, 'tis all the dead can have, shall live."

She said: the cloud-compeller, overcome,
Assents to fate, and ratifies the doom.
Then touch'd with grief, the weeping heavens distill'd
A shower of blood o'er all the fatal field. 560
The god, his eyes averting from the plain,
Laments his son, predestined to be slain,
Far from the Lycian shores, his happy native reign.

Now met in arms, the combatants appear ;
Each heaved the shield, and poised the lifted spear :
From strong Patroclus' hand the javelin fled, 566
And pass'd the groin of valiant Thrasymed :
The nerves unbraced, no more his bulk sustain ;
He falls, and falling bites the bloody plain.
Two sounding darts the Lycian leader threw ; 570
The first aloof with erring fury flew,
The next transpierced Achilles' mortal steed,
The generous Pedasus of Theban breed ;

Fix'd in the shoulder's joint, he reel'd around,
Roll'd in the bloody dust, and paw'd the slippery
ground. 575

His sudden fall the entangled harness broke ;
Each axle crackled, and the chariot shook :
When bold Automedon, to disengage
The starting coursers, and restrain their rage,
Divides the traces with his sword, and freed 580
The encumber'd chariot from the dying steed :
The rest move on, obedient to the rein ;
The car rolls slowly o'er the dusty plain.

The towering chiefs to fiercer fight advance,
And first Sarpedon whirl'd his weighty lance, 585
Which o'er the warrior's shoulder took its course,
And spent in empty air its dying force.

Not so Patroclus' never-erring dart ;
Aim'd at his breast, it pierced a mortal part,
Where the strong fibres bind the solid heart. 590

Then, as the mountain oak, or poplar tall,
Or pine, (fit mast for some great admiral,)
Nods to the axe, till with a groaning sound
It sinks, and spreads its honours on the ground :
Thus fell the king ; and laid on earth supine, 595
Before his chariot stretch'd his form divine :

He grasp'd the dust distain'd with streaming gore,
And, pale in death, lay groaning on the shore.
So lies a bull beneath a lion's paws, 599
While the grim savage grinds with foaming jaws
The trembling limbs, and sucks the smoking blood ;
Deep groans, and hollow roars, rebellow through the
wood.

Then to the leader of the Lycian band
The dying chief address'd his last command :
" Glaucus, be bold ; thy task be first to dare 605
The glorious dangers of destructive war,
To lead my troops, to combat at their head,
Incite the living, and supply the dead.
Tell them I charged them with my latest breath
Not unrevenged to bear Sarpedon's death. 610

What grief, what shame, must Glaucus undergo,
 If these spoil'd arms adorn a Grecian foe !
 Then as a friend, and as a warrior, fight ;
 Defend my body, conquer in my right ;
 That, taught by great examples, all may try 615
 Like thee to vanquish, or like me to die."

He ceased ; the fates suppress'd his labouring
 breath,

And his eyes darken'd with the shades of death.
 'The insulting victor with disdain bestrode
 'The prostrate prince, and on his bosom trod ; 620
 'Then drew the weapon from his panting heart,
 'The reeking fibres clinging to the dart :
 From the wide wound gush'd out a stream of blood,
 And the soul issued in the purple flood.
 His flying steeds the Myrmidons detain, 625
 Unguided now, their mighty master slain.
 All-impotent of aid, transfix'd with grief,
 Unhappy Glaucus heard the dying chief.
 His painful arm, yet useless with the smart
 Inflicted late by Teucer's deadly dart, 630
 Supported on his better hand he staid :
 To Phœbus then ('twas all he could) he pray'd :

"All-seeing monarch ! whether Lycia's coast,
 Or sacred Ilion, thy bright presence boast,
 Powerful alike to ease the wretch's smart ; 635
 Oh hear me ! god of every healing art !
 Lo ! stiff with clotted blood, and pierced with pain
 That thrills my arm, and shoots through every vein,
 I stand unable to sustain the spear,
 And sigh, at distance from the glorious war. 640
 Low in the dust is great Sarpedon laid,
 Nor Jove vouchsafed his hapless offspring aid.
 But thou, oh god of health ! thy succour lend,
 To guard the relics of my slaughter'd friend :
 For thou, though distant, canst restore my might,
 To head my Lycians, and support the fight." 646

Apollo heard ; and, suppliant as he stood,
 His heavenly hand restrain'd the flux of blood :

He drew the dolours from the wounded part,
And breathed a spirit in his rising heart. 650
Renew'd by art divine, the hero stands,
And owns the assistance of immortal hands.
First to the fight his native troops he warms,
Then loudly calls on 'Troy's vindictive arms: 654
With ample strides he stalks from place to place;
Now fires Agenor, now Polydamas!
Æneas next, and Hector he accosts;
Inflaming thus the rage of all their hosts:

“What thoughts, regardless chief! thy breast employ?

Oh too forgetful of the friends of 'Troy! 660
Those generous friends, who, from their country far,
Breathe their brave souls out in another's war.
See! where in dust the great Sarpedon lies,
In action valiant, and in council wise,
Who guarded right, and kept his people free; 665
To all his Lycians lost, and lost to thee!
Stretch'd by Patroclus' arm on yonder plains;
Oh save from hostile rage his loved remains!
Ah! let not Greece his conquer'd trophies boast,
Nor on his corse revenge her heroes lost.” 670

He spoke: each leader in his grief partook;
Troy, at the loss, through all her regions shook;
'Transfix'd with deep regret, they view o'erthrown
At once his country's pillar, and their own;
A chief, who led to Troy's beleaguer'd wall 675
A host of heroes, and outshined them all.
Fired, they rush on; first Hector seeks the foes,
And with superior vengeance greatly glows.

But o'er the dead the fierce Patroclus stands,
And, rousing Ajax, roused the listening bands: 680

“Heroes, be men! be what you were before;
Or weigh the great occasion, and be more.
The chief who taught our lofty walls to yield
Lies pale in death, extended on the field:
To guard his body, Troy in numbers flies; 685
'Tis half the glory to maintain our prize.

Haste, strip his arms, the slaughter round him
spread,

And send the living Lycians to the dead."

The heroes kindle at his fierce command ;
The martial squadrons close on either hand : 690
Here Troy and Lycia charge with loud alarms,
Thessalia there and Greece oppose their arms.
With horrid shouts they circle round the slain ;
The clash of armour rings o'er all the plain.
Great Jove, to swell the horrors of the fight, 695
O'er the fierce armies pours pernicious night,
And round his son confounds the warring hosts,
His fate ennobling with a crowd of ghosts.

Now Greece gives way, and great Epigeus falls ;
Agacleus' son, from Budium's lofty walls ; 700
Who, chased for murder thence, a suppliant came
To Peleus and the silver-footed dame ;
Now sent to Troy, Achilles' arms to aid,
He pays due vengeance to his kinsman's shade.
Soon as his luckless hand had touch'd the dead, 705
A rock's large fragment thunder'd on his head ;
Hurl'd by Hectorian force, it cleft in twain
His shatter'd helm, and stretch'd him o'er the slain.

Fierce to the van of fight Patroclus came ;
And, like an eagle darting at his game, 710
Sprung on the Trojan and the Lycian band.
What grief thy heart, what fury urged thy hand
Oh generous Greek ! when with full vigour thrown
At Stenelaus flew the weighty stone, 714
Which sunk him to the dead ; when Troy, too near
That arm, drew back, and Hector learn'd to fear.
Far as an able hand a lance can throw,
Or at the lists, or at the fighting foe ;
So far the Trojans from their lines retired,
Till Glaucus, turning, all the rest inspired. 720
Then Bathyclæus fell beneath his rage,
The only hope of Chalcon's trembling age :
Wide o'er the land was stretch'd his large domain,
With stately seats and riches bless'd in vain.

Him, bold with youth, and eager to pursue 725
The flying Lycians, Glaucus met, and slew;
Pierced through the bosom with a sudden wound,
He fell, and, falling, made the fields resound.
The Achaians sorrow for their hero slain; 729
With conquering shouts the Trojans shake the plain,
And crowd to spoil the dead: the Greeks oppose:
An iron circle round the carcass grows.

Then brave Laogonus resign'd his breath,
Despatch'd by Merion to the shades of death:
On Ida's holy hill he made abode, 735
The priest of Jove, and honour'd like his god.
Between the jaw and ear the javelin went:
The soul, exhaling, issued at the vent.

His spear Æneas at the victor threw, 739
Who stooping forward from the death withdrew;
The lance hiss'd harmless o'er his covering shield,
And trembling struck, and rooted in the field;
There yet scarce spent, it quivers on the plain,
Sent by the great Æneas' arm in vain.

"Swift as thou art," the raging hero cries, 745
"And skill'd in dancing to dispute the prize,
My spear, the destined passage had it found,
Had fix'd thy active vigour to the ground."

"Oh valiant leader of the Dardan host!"
Insulted Merion thus retorts the boast; 750
"Strong as you are, 'tis mortal force you trust;
An arm as strong may stretch thee in the dust:
And if to this my lance thy fate be given,
Vain are thy vaunts; success is still from Heaven:
This instant sends thee down to Pluto's coast; 755
Mine is the glory, his thy parting ghost."

"Oh friend!" Menœtius' son this answer gave,
"With words to combat ill befits the brave:
Not empty boasts the sons of Troy repel,
Your swords must plunge them to the shades of
hell. 760

To speak, beseems the council; but to dare
In glorious action is the task of war."

This said, Patroclus to the battle flies ;
Great Merion follows, and new shouts arise :
Shields, helmets rattle, as the warriors close ; 765
And thick and heavy sounds the storm of blows.
As through the thrilling vale, or mountain ground,
The labours of the woodman's axe resound ;
Blows following blows are heard re-echoing wide,
While crackling forests fall on every side : 770
Thus echo'd all the fields with loud alarms,
So fell the warriors, and so rung their arms.

Now great Sarpedon on the sandy shore,
His heavenly form defaced with dust and gore,
And stuck with darts by warring heroes shed, 775
Lies undistinguish'd from the vulgar dead.
His long-disputed corse the chiefs enclose,
On every side the busy combat grows ;
Thick as beneath some shepherd's thatch'd abode,
(The pails high foaming with a milky flood,) 780
The buzzing flies, a persevering train,
Incessant swarm, and chased, return again.

Jove view'd the combat with a stern survey,
And eyes that flash'd intolerable day.
Fix'd on the field his sight, his breast debates 785
The vengeance due, and meditates the fates :
Whether to urge their prompt effect, and call
The force of Hector to Patroclus' fall,
This instant see his shortlived trophies won,
And stretch him breathless on his slaughter'd son ;
Or yet with many a soul's untimely flight, 791
Augment the fame and horror of the fight.
To crown Achilles' valiant friend with praise
At length he dooms ; and that his last of days
Shall set in glory ; bids him drive the foe ; 795
Nor unattended see the shades below.
Then Hector's mind he fills with dire dismay ;
He mounts his car, and calls his hosts away :
Sunk with Troy's heavy fates, he sees decline
The scales of Jove, and pants with awe divine. 800

Then, not before, the hardy Lycians fled,
And left their monarch with the common dead :
Around, in heaps on heaps, a dreadful wall
Of carnage rises, as the heroes fall.
(So Jove decreed !) At length the Greeks obtain 805
The prize contested, and despoil the slain.
The radiant arms are by Patroclus borne,
Patroclus' ships the glorious spoils adorn.

Then thus to Phœbus, in the realms above,
Spoke from his throne the cloud-compelling Jove :
" Descend, my Phœbus ! on the Phrygian plain, 811
And from the fight convey Sarpedon slain :
Then bathe his body in the crystal flood ;
With dust dishonour'd, and deform'd with blood :
O'er all his limbs ambrosial odours shed, 815
And with celestial robes adorn the dead.
Those rites discharged, his sacred corse bequeath
To the soft arms of silent Sleep and Death :
They to his friends the mournful charge shall bear,
His friends a tomb and pyramids shall rear : 820
What honours mortals after death receive,
Those unavailing honours we may give."

Apollo bows, and from Mount Ida's height
Swift to the field precipitates his flight ;
Thence from the war the breathless hero bore, 825
Veil'd in a cloud, to silver Simois' shore ;
There bathed his honourable wounds, and dress'd
His manly members in the immortal vest ;
And with perfumes of sweet ambrosial dews
Restores his freshness, and his form renews. 830
Then Sleep and Death, two twins of winged race,
Of matchless swiftness, but of silent pace,
Received Sarpedon, at the god's command,
And in a moment reach'd the Lycian land :
The corse amid his weeping friends they laid, 835
Where endless honours wait the sacred shade.

Meanwhile Patroclus pours along the plains,
With foaming coursers, and with loosen'd reins.

Fierce on the Trojan and the Lycian crew,
 Ah, blind to fate! thy headlong fury flew: 840
 Against what fate and powerful Jove ordain,
 Vain was thy friend's command, thy courage vain.
 For he, the god, whose counsels uncontroll'd
 Dismay the mighty, and confound the bold;
 The god who gives, resumes, and orders all, 845
 He urged thee on, and urged thee on to fall.

Who first, brave hero! by that arm was slain,
 Who last beneath thy vengeance press'd the plain,
 When Heaven itself thy fatal fury led,
 And call'd to fill the number of the dead? 850
 Adrestus first; Autonous then succeeds;
 Echeclus follows; next young Megas bleeds:
 Epistor, Menalippus, bite the ground;
 The slaughter, Elasmus and Mulius crown'd
 Then sunk Pylartes to eternal night; 855
 The rest, dispersing, trust their fates to flight.

Now Troy had stoop'd beneath his matchless
 power,
 But flaming Phœbus kept the sacred tower.
 Thrice at the battlements Patroclus struck,
 His blazing ægis thrice Apollo shook; 860
 He tried the fourth; when, bursting from the cloud,
 A more than mortal voice was heard aloud:

“Patroclus! cease; this Heaven-defended wall
 Defies thy lance; not fated yet to fall:
 Thy friend, thy greater far, it shall withstand; 865
 Troy shall not stoop, ev'n to Achilles, hand.”

So spoke the god who darts celestial fires;
 The Greek obeys him, and with awe retires:
 While Hector, checking at the Scæan gates
 His panting coursers, in his breast debates, 870
 Or in the field his forces to employ,
 Or draw the troops within the walls of Troy.
 Thus while he thought, beside him Phœbus stood,
 In Asius' shape, who reign'd by Sangar's flood:
 (Thy brother, Hecuba! from Dymas sprung, 875
 A valiant warrior, haughty, bold, and young.)

Thus he accosts him : " What a shameful sight !
Gods ! is it Hector that forbears the fight ?
Were thine my vigour, this successful spear
Should soon convince thee of so false a fear. 880
Turn, then, ah, turn thee to the field of fame,
And in Patroclus' blood efface thy shame.
Perhaps Apollo shall thy arms succeed,
And Heaven ordains him by thy lance to bleed."

So spoke the inspiring god ; then took his flight,
And plunged amid the tumult of the fight. 886
He bids Cebrión drive the rapid car ;
The lash resounds, the coursers rush to war :
The god the Grecians' sinking souls depress'd,
And pour'd swift spirits through each Trojan
breast. 890

Patroclus lights, impatient for the fight ;
A spear his left, a stone employs his right :
With all his nerves he drives it at the foe ;
Pointed above, and rough and gross below :
The falling ruin crush'd Cebrión's head, 895
The lawless offspring of King Priam's bed ;
His front, brows, eyes, one undistinguish'd wound :
The bursting balls drop sightless to the ground.
The charioteer, while yet he held the rein,
Struck from the car, falls headlong on the plain. 900
To the dark shades the soul unwilling glides,
While the proud victor thus his fall derides :

" Good heavens ! what active feats yon artist
shows !

What skilful divers are our Phrygian foes !
Mark with what ease they sink into the sand ! 905
Pity, that all their practice is by land !"

Then rushing sudden on his prostrate prize,
To spoil the carcass fierce Patroclus flies :
Swift as a lion, terrible and bold,
That sweeps the fields, depopulates the fold ; 910
Pierced through the dauntless heart, then tumbles
slain ;

And from his fatal courage finds his bane.

At once bold Hector, leaping from his car,
Defends the body, and provokes the war.
Thus for some slaughter'd hind, with equal rage, 915
Two lordly rulers of the wood engage ;
Stung with fierce hunger, each the prey invades,
And echoing roars rebellow through the shades.
Stern Hector fastens on the warrior's head,
And by the foot Patroclus drags the dead ; 920
While all around confusion, rage, and fright
Mix the contending host in mortal fight.
So pent by hills, the wild winds roar aloud
In the deep bosom of some gloomy wood ;
Leaves, arms, and trees, aloft in air are blown, 925
The broad oaks crackle, and the sylvans groan ;
This way and that the rattling thicket bends,
And the whole forest in one crash descends.
Not with less noise, with less tumultuous rage,
In dreadful shock the mingled hosts engage. 930
Darts shower'd on darts, now round the carcass ring ;
Now flights of arrows bounding from the string :
Stones follow stones ; some clatter on the fields,
Some, hard and heavy, shake the sounding shields.
But where the rising whirlwind clouds the plains, 935
Sunk in soft dust the mighty chief remains,
And stretch'd in death, forgets the guiding reins !
Now flaming from the zenith, Sol had driven
His fervid orb through half the vault of heaven ;
While on each host with equal tempest fell 940
The showering darts, and numbers sunk to hell.
But when his evening wheels o'erhung the main,
Glad conquest rested on the Grecian train.
Then from amid the tumult and alarms
They draw the conquer'd corse and radiant arms ; 945
Then rash Patroclus with new fury glows,
And, breathing slaughter, pours amid the foes.
Thrice on the press like Mars himself he flew,
And thrice three heroes at each onset slew.
There ends thy glory ! there the fates untwine 950
The last black remnant of so bright a line :

Apollo dreadful stops thy middle way ;
Death calls, and Heaven allows no longer day !

For lo ! the god in dusky clouds enshrined,
Approaching, dealt a staggering blow behind : 955

The weighty shock his neck and shoulders feel ;
His eyes flash sparkles, his stunned senses reel
In giddy darkness ; far to distance flung,
His bounding helmet on the champaign rung.
Achilles' plume is stain'd with dust and gore, 960

That plume, which never stoop'd to earth before ;
Long used, untouched, in fighting fields to shine,
And shade the temples of the man divine.
Jove dooms it now on Hector's helm to nod ;
Not long—for fate pursues him, and the god. 965

His spear in shivers falls : his ample shield
Drops from his arm : his baldric strews the field :
The corslet his astonish'd breast forsakes :
Loose is each joint ; each nerve with horror shakes.
Stupid he stares, and all-assistless stands : 970
Such is the force of more than mortal hands !

A Dardan youth there was, well known to fame,
From Panthus sprung, Euphorbus was his name ;
Famed for the manage of the foaming horse,
Skill'd in the dart, and matchless in the course : 975
Full twenty knights he tumbled from the car,
While yet he learn'd his rudiments of war.

His venturous spear first drew the hero's gore ;
He struck, he wounded, but he durst no more ;
Nor, though disarm'd, Patroclus' fury stood : 980
But swift withdrew the long-protended wood,
And turn'd him short, and herded in the crowd.

Thus by an arm divine, and mortal spear,
Wounded at once, Patroclus yields to fear,
Retires for succour to his social train, 985
And flies the fate which Heaven decreed in vain.

Stern Hector, as the bleeding chief he views,
Breaks through the ranks, and his retreat pursues :
The lance arrests him with a mortal wound ;
He falls, earth thunders, and his arms resound. 990

With him all Greece was sunk ; that moment all
Her yet surviving heroes seem'd to fall.
So, scorch'd with heat, along the desert shore,
The roaming lion meets a bristly boar,
Fast by the spring ; they both dispute the flood, 995
With flaming eyes, and jaws besmear'd with blood :
At length the sovereign savage wins the strife,
And the torn boar resigns his thirst and life.
Patroclus thus ; so many chiefs o'erthrown,
So many lives effused, expires his own. 1000
As dying now at Hector's feet he lies,
He sternly views him, and triumphing cries :
“ Lie there, Patroclus ! and with thee the joy,
Thy pride once promised, of subverting Troy ;
The fancied scenes of Ilion wrapp'd in flames, 1005
And thy soft pleasures served with captive dames !
Unthinking man ! I fought those towers to free,
And guard that beauteous race from lords like
thee :

But thou a prey to vultures shalt be made ;
Thy own Achilles cannot lend thee aid ; 1010
Though much at parting that great chief might say,
And much enjoin thee this important day :
‘ Return not, my brave friend,’ perhaps he said,
‘ Without the bloody arms of Hector dead.’ ”
He spoke, Patroclus march'd, and thus he sped. 1015
Supine, and wildly gazing on the skies,
With faint, expiring breath, the chief replies :
“ Vain boaster, cease ! and know the powers di-
vine :

Jove's and Apollo's is this deed, not thine ;
To Heaven is owed whate'er your own you call, 1020
And Heaven itself disarm'd me ere my fall.
Had twenty mortals, each thy match in might,
Opposed me fairly, they had sunk in fight :
By fate and Phœbus was I first o'erthrown,
Euphorbus next : the third mean part thy own. 1025
But thou, imperious ! hear my latest breath ;
The gods inspire it, and it sounds thy death.

Insulting man, thou shalt be soon as I ;
Black fate hangs o'er thee, and thy hour draws nigh ;
Ev'n now on life's last verge I see thee stand, 1030
I see thee fall, and by Achilles' hand."

He faints ; the soul unwilling wings her way,
(The beauteous body left a load of clay,)
Flits to the lone, uncomfortable coast ;
A naked, wandering, melancholy ghost ! 1035

Then Hector pausing, as his eyes he fed
On the pale carcass, thus address'd the dead :
" From whence this boding speech, the stern de-
cree

Of death denounced, or why denounced to me ?
Why not as well Achilles' fate be given 1040
To Hector's lance ? who knows the will of Heaven ?"

Pensive he said : then pressing as he lay
His breathless bosom, tore the lance away,
And upward cast the corse : the reeking spear
He shakes, and charges the bold charioteer. 1045
But swift Automedon with loosen'd reins,
Rapt in the chariot o'er the distant plains,
Far from his rage the immortal coursers drove ;
The immortal coursers were the gift of Jove.

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT.

the seventh Battle, for the Body of Patroclus: the Acts of Menelaus.

MENELAUS, on the death of Patroclus, defends his body from the enemy: Euphorbus, who attempts it, is slain—Hector advancing, Menelaus retires; but soon returns with Ajax, and drives him off—This Glaucus objects to Hector as a flight, who thereon puts on the armour he had won from Patroclus, and renews the battle—The Greeks give way, till Ajax rallies them: Æneas sustains the Trojans—Æneas and Hector attempt the chariot of Achilles, which is borne off by Automedon—The horses of Achilles deplore the loss of Patroclus: Jupiter covers his body with a thick darkness: the noble prayer of Ajax on that occasion—Menelaus sends Antilochus to Achilles, with the news of Patroclus's death: then returns to the fight, where, though attacked with the utmost fury, he and Meriones, assisted by the Ajaxes, bear off the body to the ships.—[The time is the evening of the eight-and-twentieth day. The scene lies before Troy.]

ON the cold earth divine Patroclus spread,
Lies pierced with wounds among the vulgar dead.
Great Menelaus, touch'd with generous wo,
Springs to the front, and guards him from the foe:
Thus round her new-fall'n young the heifer moves,
Fruit of her throes, and firstborn of her loves: 6
And anxious (helpless as he lies, and bare)
Turns and returns her, with a mother's care.
Opposed to each that near the carcass came,
His broad shield glimmers, and his lances flame. 10
The son of Panthus, skill'd the dart to send,
Eyes the dead hero, and insults the friend.

Wide through the neck appears the grisly wound,
Prone sinks the warrior, and his arms resound.
The shining circlets of his golden hair,
Which ev'n the Graces might be proud to wear,
Instarr'd with gems, and gold, bestrew the shore, 55
With dust dishonour'd, and deform'd with gore.

As the young olive, in some sylvan scene,
Crown'd by fresh fountains with eternal green,
Lifts the gay head, in snowy flow'rets fair,
And plays and dances to the gentle air ; 60
When lo ! a whirlwind from high heaven invades
The tender plant, and withers all its shades ;
It lies uprooted from its genial bed,
A lovely ruin now defaced and dead :
Thus young, thus beautiful, Euphorbus lay, 65
While the fierce Spartan tore his arms away.
Proud of his deed, and glorious in the prize,
Affrighted Troy the towering victor flies :
Flies, as before some mountain lion's ire
The village curs and trembling swains retire ; 70
When o'er the slaughter'd bull they hear him roar,
And see his jaws distil with smoking gore :
All pale with fear, at distance scatter'd round,
'They shout incessant, and the vales resound.

Meanwhile, Apollo view'd with envious eyes, 75
And urged great Hector to dispute the prize :
(In Mentès' shape, beneath whose martial care
The rough Ciconians learn'd the trade of war.)
" Forbear," he cried, " with fruitless speed to chase
Achilles' coursers, of ethereal race ; 80
They stoop not, these, to mortal man's command,
Or stoop to none but great Achilles' hand.
Too long amused with a pursuit so vain,
Turn, and behold the brave Euphorbus slain !
By Sparta slain ! for ever now suppress'd 85
The fire which burn'd in that undaunted breast !"

Thus having spoke, Apollo wing'd his flight,
And mix'd with mortals in the toils of fight :

His words infix'd unutterable care
 Deep in great Hector's soul; through all the war 90
 He darts his anxious eye; and instant view'd
 The breathless hero in his blood imbru'd,
 (Forth welling from the wound, as prone he lay,)
 And in the victor's hands the shining prey.
 Sheath'd in bright arms, through cleaving ranks he
 flies, 95

And sends his voice in thunder to the skies :
 Fierce as a flood of flame by Vulcan sent,
 It flew, and fired the nations as it went.
 Atrides from the voice the storm divined,
 And thus explored his own unconquer'd mind : 100
 "Then shall I quit Patroclus on the plain,
 Slain in my cause, and for my honour slain?
 Desert the arms, the relics of my friend?
 Or, singly, Hector and his troops attend?
 Sure where such partial favour Heaven bestow'd, 105
 To brave the hero were to brave the god:
 Forgive me, Greece, if once I quit the field;
 'Tis not to Hector, but to Heaven I yield.
 Yet, nor the god, nor Heaven, should give me fear,
 Did but the voice of Ajax reach my ear : 110
 Still would we turn, still battle on the plains,
 And give Achilles all that yet remains
 Of his and our Patroclus." This, no more,
 The time allow'd : 'Troy thicken'd on the shore,
 A sable scene! The terrors Hector led. 115
 Slow he recedes, and sighing quits the dead.

So from the fold the unwilling lion parts,
 Forced by loud clamours, and a storm of darts.
 He flies indeed, but threatens as he flies,
 With heart indignant and retorted eyes. 120
 Now enter'd in the Spartan ranks, he turn'd
 His manly breast, and with new fury burn'd;
 O'er all the black battalions sent his view,
 And through the cloud the godlike Ajax knew;
 Where labouring on the left the warrior stood, 125
 All grim in arms, and cover'd o'er with blood;

There breathing, courage, where the god of day
Had sunk each heart with terror and dismay.

To him the king: "Oh Ajax, oh my friend!
Haste, and Patroclus' loved remains defend: 130
The body to Achilles to restore,
Demands our care; alas, we can no more!
For naked now, despoil'd of arms, he lies,
And Hector glories in the dazzling prize."
He said, and touch'd his heart. The raging pair
Pierce the thick battle, and provoke the war. 136
Already had stern Hector seized his head,
And doom'd to Trojan dogs the unhappy dead;
But soon as Ajax rear'd his towerlike shield,
Sprung to his car, and measured back the field. 140
His train to Troy the radiant armour bear,
To stand a trophy of his fame in war.

Meanwhile, great Ajax, his broad shield display'd,
Guards the dead hero with the dreadful shade;
And now before, and now behind he stood. 145
Thus in the centre of some gloomy wood,
With many a step the lioness surrounds
Her tawny young, beset by men and hounds;
Elate her heart, and rousing all her powers,
Dark o'er the fiery balls each hanging eyebrow
lowers, 150

Fast by his side, the generous Spartan glows
With great revenge, and feeds his inward woes.

But Glaucus, leader of the Lycian aids,
On Hector frowning, thus his flight upbraids:
"Where now in Hector shall we Hector find? 155
A manly form without a manly mind.
Is this, oh chief! a hero's boasted fame?
How vain, without the merit, is the name!
Since battle is renounced, thy thoughts employ
What other methods may preserve thy Troy: 160
'Tis time to try if Ilion's state can stand
By thee alone, nor ask a foreign hand;
Mean, empty boast! but shall the Lycians stake
Their lives for you? those Lycians you forsake?

What from thy thankless arms can we expect ? 165
 Thy friend Sarpedon proves thy base neglect :
 Say, shall our slaughter'd bodies guard your walls,
 While unrevenge'd the great Sarpedon falls ?
 Ev'n where he died for Troy, you left him there,
 A feast for dogs, and all the fowls of air. 170
 On my command if any Lycian wait,
 Hence let him march, and give up Troy to fate.
 Did such a spirit as the gods impart
 Impel one Trojan hand or Trojan heart,
 (Such as should burn in every soul that draws 175
 The sword for glory and his country's cause,)
 Ev'n yet our mutual arms we might employ,
 And drag yon carcass to the walls of Troy.
 Oh ! were Patroclus ours, we might obtain
 Sarpedon's arms and honour'd corse again ! 180
 Greece with Achilles' friend should be repaid,
 And thus due honours purchased to his shade.
 But words are vain. Let Ajax once appear,
 And Hector trembles and recedes with fear :
 Thou darest not meet the terrors of his eye ; 185
 And lo ! already thou preparest to fly."

The Trojan chief with fix'd resentment eyed
 The Lycian leader and sedate replied :
 " Say, is it just, my friend, that Hector's ear
 From such a warrior such a speech should hear ?
 I deem'd thee once the wisest of thy kind, 191
 But ill this insult suits a prudent mind.
 I shun great Ajax ? I desert my train ?
 'Tis mine to prove the rash assertion vain ;
 I joy to mingle where the battle bleeds, 195
 And hear the thunder of the sounding steeds.
 But Jove's high will is ever uncontroll'd,
 The strong he withers, and confounds the bold ;
 Now crowns with fame the mighty man, and now
 Strikes the fresh garland from the victor's brow ! 200
 Come, through yon squadrons let us hew the way,
 And thou be witness if I fear to-day ;

If yet a Greek the sight of Hector dread,
Or yet their hero dare defend the dead."

Then turning to the martial hosts, he cries : 205

"Ye Trojans, Dardans, Lycians, and allies !

Be men, my friends, in action as in name,

And yet be mindful of your ancient fame.

Hector in proud Achilles' arms shall shine,

Torn from his friend, by right of conquest mine."

He strode along the field as thus he said : 211

(The sable plumage nodded o'er his head :)

Swift through the spacious plain he sent a look ;

One instant saw, one instant overtook

The distant band, that on the sandy shore 215

The radiant spoils to sacred Ilion bore.

There his own mail unbraced the field bestrow'd ;

His train to Troy convey'd the massy load.

Now blazing in the immortal arms he stands,

The work and present of celestial hands ; 220

By aged Peleus to Achilles given,

As first to Peleus by the court of heaven :

His father's arms not long Achilles wears,

Forbid by fate to reach his father's years.

Him, proud in triumph, glitt'ring from afar, 225

The god whose thunder rends the troubled air

Beheld with pity, as apart he sate,

And, conscious, look'd through all the scene of fate.

He shook the sacred honours of his head ;

Olympus trembled, and the godhead said, 230

"Ah wretched man ! unmindful of thy end !

A moment's glory, and what fates attend !

In heavenly panoply divinely bright

Thou stand'st, and armies tremble at thy sight,

As at Achilles' self ! beneath thy dart 235

Lies slain the great Achilles' dearer part :

Thou from the mighty dead those arms hast torn,

Which once the greatest of mankind had worn.

Yet live ! I give thee one illustrious day,

A blaze of glory ere thou fadest away. 240

For ah ! no more Andromache shall come,
With joyful tears to welcome Hector home ;
No more officious, with endearing charms,
From thy tired limbs unbrace Pelides' arms !”

Then with his sable brow he gave the nod 245
That seals his word ; the sanction of the god.

The stubborn arms, by Jove's command disposed,
Conform'd spontaneous, and around him closed.
Fill'd with the god, enlarg'd his members grew,
Through all his veins a sudden vigour flew, 250
The blood in brisker tides began to roll,

And Mars himself came rushing on his soul.
Exhorting loud through all the field he strode,
And look'd, and moved, Achilles, or a god.

Now Mesthles, Glaucus, Medon he inspires, 255

Now Phorcys, Chromius, and Hippothous fires ;

The great Thersilochus like fury found,

Asteropæus kindled at the sound,

And Ennomus, in augury renown'd.

“ Hear, all ye hosts, and hear, unnumber'd bands 260

Of neighbouring nations, or of distant lands !

'Twas not for state we summon'd you so far,

To boast our numbers and the pomp of war ;

Ye came to fight ; a valiant foe to chase,

To save our present and our future race. 265

For this, our wealth, our products you enjoy,

And glean the relics of exhausted Troy.

Now then to conquer or to die prepare,

To die or conquer are the terms of war.

Whatever hand shall win Patroclus slain, 270

Whoe'er shall drag him to the Trojan train,

With Hector's self shall equal honours claim ;

With Hector part the spoil and share the fame.”

Fired by his words, the troops dismiss their fears,

They join, they thicken, they protend their spears ;

Full on the Greeks they drive in firm array, 276

And each from Ajax hopes the glorious prey :

Vain hope ! what numbers shall the field o'erspread,

What victims perish round the mighty dead !

Great Ajax mark'd the growing storm from far,
 And thus bespoke his brother of the war: 281
 "Our fatal day, alas! is come, my friend,
 And all our wars and glories at an end!
 'Tis not this corse alone we guard in vain,
 Condemn'd to vultures on the Trojan plain; 285
 We too must yield: the same sad fate must fall
 On thee, on me, perhaps, my friend, on all.
 See what a tempest direful Hector spreads,
 And lo! it bursts, it thunders on our heads!
 Call on our Greeks, if any hear the call, 290
 The bravest Greeks: this hour demands them all."

The warrior raised his voice, and wide around
 The field re-echoed the distressful sound.
 "Oh chiefs! oh princes! to whose hand is given
 The rule of men, whose glory is from Heaven! 295
 Whom with due honours both Atrides grace;
 Ye guides and guardians of our Argive race!
 All whom this well-known voice shall reach from
 far,

All whom I see not through this cloud of war,
 Come all! let generous rage your arms employ, 300
 And save Patroclus from the dogs of Troy."

Oilean Ajax first the voice obey'd,
 Swift was his pace, and ready was his aid;
 Next him Idomeneus, slow with age,
 And Merion burning with a hero's rage. 305
 The long succeeding numbers who can name?
 But all were Greeks, and eager all for fame.
 Fierce to the charge great Hector led the throng;
 Whole Troy imbodied rush'd with shouts along.
 Thus, when a mountain billow foams and raves, 310
 Where some swoln river disembogues its waves,
 Full in the mouth is stopp'd the rushing tide,
 The boiling ocean works from side to side,
 The river trembles to its utmost shore,
 And distant rocks rebellow to the roar. 315

Nor less resolved the firm Achaian band
 With brazen shields in horrid circle stand:

Jove, pouring darkness o'er the mingled fight,
Conceals the warriors' shining helms in night :
To him, the chief for whom the hosts contend, 320
Had lived not hateful, for he lived a friend :
Dead he protects him with superior care,
Nor dooms his carcass to the birds of air.
The first attack the Grecians scarce sustain,
Repulsed, they yield, the Trojans seize the slain :
Then fierce they rally, to revenge led on 326
By the swift rage of Ajax Telamon—
Ajax, to Peleus' son the second name,
In graceful stature next, and next in fame.
With headlong force the foremost ranks he tore : 330
So through the thicket bursts the mountain boar,
And rudely scatters, far to distance round
The frightened hunter and the baying hound.
The son of Lethus, brave Pelasgus' heir,
Hippothous, dragg'd the carcass through the war ;
The sinewy ankles bored, the feet he bound 336
With thongs, inserted through the double wound :
Inevitable fate o'ertakes the deed ;
Doom'd by great Ajax' vengeful lance to bleed :
It cleft the helmet's brazen cheeks in twain ; 340
The shatter'd crest and horse hair strew the plain :
With nerves relax'd he tumbles to the ground :
The brain comes gushing through the ghastly wound :
He drops Patroclus' foot, and o'er him spread
Now lies, a sad companion of the dead ; 345
Far from Larissa lies, his native air,
And ill requites his parents' tender care.
Lamented youth ! in life's firm bloom he fell,
Sent by great Ajax to the shades of hell.
Once more at Ajax, Hector's javelin flies : 350
The Grecian, marking as it cut the skies,
Shunn'd the descending death ; which, hissing on,
Stretch'd in the dust the great Iphytus' son,
Schedius the brave, of all the Phocian kind
The boldest warrior, and the noblest mind : 355

In little Panope, for strength renown'd,
 He held his seat, and ruled the realms around.
 Plunged in his throat, the weapon drank his blood,
 And deep transpiercing through the shoulder stood :
 In clanging arms the hero fell, and all 360
 The fields resounded with his weighty fall.
 Phorcys, as slain Hippothous he defends,
 The Telamonian lance his belly rends :
 The hollow armour bursts before the stroke,
 And through the wound the rushing entrails broke.
 In strong convulsions panting on the sands 366
 He lies, and grasps the dust with dying hands.

Struck at the sight, recede the Trojan train :
 The shouting Argives strip the heroes slain.
 And now had Troy, by Greece compell'd to yield, 370
 Fled to her ramparts, and resign'd the field ;
 Greece, in her native fortitude elate,
 With Jove averse, had turn'd the scale of fate.
 But Phœbus urged Æneas to the fight :
 He seem'd like aged Periphas to sight ; 375
 A herald in Anchises' love grown old,
 Revered for prudence ; and, with prudence, bold.

Thus he: "What methods yet, oh chief! remain,
 To save your Troy, though Heaven its fall ordain ?
 There have been heroes, who, by virtuous care 380
 By valour, numbers, and by arts of war,
 Have forced the powers to spare a sinking state,
 And gain'd at length the glorious odds of fate :
 But you, when fortune smiles, when Jove declares
 His partial favour, and assists your wars, 385
 Your shameful efforts 'gainst yourselves employ,
 And force the unwilling god to ruin Troy."

Æneas through the form assumed describes
 The power conceal'd, and thus to Hector cries :
 "Oh lasting shame ! to our own fears a prey, 390
 We seek our ramparts, and desert the day.
 A god, nor is he less, my bosom warms,
 And tells me Jove asserts the Trojan arms."

He spoke, and foremost to the combat flew :
The bold example all his host pursue. 395
Then first Leocritus beneath him bled,
In vain beloved by valiant Lycomede ;
Who view'd his fall, and, grieving at the chance,
Swift to revenge it, sent his angry lance :
The whirling lance, with vigorous force address'd,
Descends, and pants in Apisaon's breast : 401
From rich Pæonia's vales the warrior came,
Next thee, Asteropeus ! in place and fame.
Asteropeus with grief beheld the slain,
And rush'd to combat, but he rush'd in vain : 405
Indissolubly firm, around the dead,
Rank within rank, on buckler buckler spread,
And hemm'd with bristling spears, the Grecians
stood ;
A brazen bulwark, and an iron wood.
Great Ajax eyes them with incessant care, 410
And in an orb contracts the crowded war,
Close in their ranks commands to fight or fall,
And stands the centre and the soul of all :
Fix'd on the spot they war, and, wounded, wound ;
A sanguine torrent steeps the reeking ground ; 415
On heaps the Greeks, on heaps the Trojans bled,
And thickening round them, rise the hills of dead.
Greece in close order, and collected might,
Yet suffers least, and sways the wavering fight ;
Fierce as conflicting fires, the combat burns, 420
And now it rises, now it sinks by turns.
In one thick darkness all the fight was lost ;
The sun, and moon, and all the ethereal host,
Seem'd as extinct ; day ravish'd from their eyes,
And all heaven's splendours blotted from the skies.
Such o'er Patroclus' body hung the night, 426
The rest in sunshine fought, and open light :
Unclouded there, the aerial azure spread,
No vapour rested on the mountain head ;
The golden sun pour'd forth a stronger ray, 430
And all the broad expansion flamed with day.

Dispersed around the plain, by fits they fight,
 And here and there their scatter'd arrows light :
 But death and darkness o'er the carcass spread,
 There burn'd the war, and there the mighty bled.

Meanwhile, the sons of Nestor, in the rear, 436
 (Their fellows routed,) toss the distant spear,
 And skirmish wide : so Nestor gave command,
 When from the ships he sent the Pylian band.
 The youthful brothers thus for fame contend, 440
 Nor knew the fortune of Achilles' friend ;
 In thought they view'd him still, with martial joy,
 Glorious in arms, and dealing deaths to Troy.

But round the corse the heroes pant for breath,
 And thick and heavy grows the work of death : 445
 O'erlabour'd now, with dust, with sweat, and gore,
 Their knees, their legs, their feet are cover'd o'er ;
 Drops follow drops, the clouds on clouds arise,
 And carnage clogs their hands, and darkness fills
 their eyes.

As when a slaughter'd bull's yet reeking hide, 450
 Strain'd with full force, and tugg'd from side to side,
 The brawny curriers stretch, and labour o'er
 The extended surface, drunk with fat and gore :
 So tugging round the corse both armies stood ;
 The mangled body bathed in sweat and blood ; 455
 While Greeks and Ilians equal strength employ,
 Now to the ships to force it, now to Troy.
 Not Pallas' self, her breast when fury warms,
 Nor he whose anger sets the world in arms,
 Could blame this scene ; such rage, such horror
 reign'd ; 460

Such Jove to honour the great dead ordain'd.

Achilles in his ships at distance lay,
 Nor knew the fatal fortune of the day ;
 He, yet unconscious of Patroclus' fall,
 In dust extended under Ilion's wall, 465
 Expects him glorious from the conquer'd plain,
 And for his wish'd return prepares in vain ;

Though well he knew, to make proud Ilion bend,
Was more than Heaven had destined to his friend—
Perhaps to him : this Thetis had reveal'd ; 470
The rest, in pity to her son, conceal'd.

Still raged the conflict round the hero dead,
And heaps on heaps by mutual wounds they bled.
“Cursed be the man,” ev'n private Greeks would say,
“Who dares dispute this well disputed day ! 475
First may the cleaving earth before our eyes
Gape wide, and drink our blood for sacrifice !
First perish all, ere haughty Troy shall boast
We lost Patroclus, and our glory lost !”

Thus they. While with one voice the Trojans
said, 480
“Grant this day, Jove ! or heap us on the dead !”
Then clash their sounding arms ; the clangours rise,
And shake the brazen concave of the skies.

Meantime, at distance from the scene of blood
The pensive steeds of great Achilles stood ; 485
Their godlike master slain before their eyes
They wept, and shared in human miseries.
In vain Automedon now shakes the rein,
Now plies the lash, and soothes and threats in vain ;
Nor to the fight nor Hellespont they go, 490
Restive they stood, and obstinate in wo ;
Still as a tombstone, never to be moved,
On some good man or woman unreprieved,
Lays its eternal weight ; or fix'd as stands
A marble courser by the sculptor's hands, 495
Placed on the hero's grave. Along their face,
The big round drops coursed down with silent pace,
Conglobing on the dust. Their manes, that late
Circled their arched necks and waved in state,
'Trail'd on the dust, beneath the yoke were spread,
And prone to earth was hung their languid head : 501
Nor Jove disdain'd to cast a pitying look,
While thus relenting to the steeds he spoke :

“Unhappy coursers of immortal strain !
Exempt from age, and deathless now in vain ! 505

Did we your race on mortal man bestow,
 Only, alas ! to share in mortal wo ?
 For, ah ! what is there, of inferior birth,
 That breathes, or creeps upon the dust of earth ;
 What wretched creature of what wretched kind, 510
 Than man more weak, calamitous, and blind ?
 A miserable race ! But cease to mourn ;
 For not by you shall Priam's son be borne
 High on the splendid car : one glorious prize
 He rashly boasts ; the rest our will denies. 515
 Ourselves will swiftness to your nerves impart,
 Ourselves with rising spirits swell your heart.
 Automedon your rapid flight shall bear
 Safe to the navy through the storm of war.
 For yet 'tis given to Troy to ravage o'er 520
 The field, and spread her slaughters to the shore :
 The sun shall see her conquer, till his fall
 With sacred darkness shades the face of all."

He said ; and, breathing in the immortal horse
 Excessive spirit, urged them to the course ; 525
 From their high manes they shake the dust, and
 bear

The kindling chariot through the parted war :
 So flies a vulture through the clamorous train
 Of geese, that scream, and scatter round the plain.
 From danger now with swiftest speed they flew, 530
 And now to conquest with like speed pursue ;
 Sole in the seat the charioteer remains,
 Now plies the javelin, now directs the reins :
 Him brave Alcimedon beheld distress'd,
 Approach'd the chariot, and the chief address'd. 535

" What god provokes thee, rashly thus to dare,
 Alone, unaided, in the thickest war ?
 Alas ! thy friend is slain, and Hector wields
 Achilles' arms triumphant in the fields."

" In happy time," the charioteer replies, 540
 " The bold Alcimedon now greets my eyes :
 No Greek like him the heavenly steeds restrains,
 Or holds their fury in suspended reins :

Patroclus, while he lived, their rage could tame,
But now Patroclus is an empty name ! 545
To thee I yield the seat, to thee resign
The ruling charge : the task of fight be mine."

He said. Alcimedon, with active heat,
Snatches the reins, and vaults into the seat.
His friend descends. The chief of Troy descried,
And call'd Æneas fighting near his side. 551

"Lo, to my sight beyond our hope restored,
Achilles' car, deserted of its lord !
'The glorious steeds our ready arms invite,
Scarce their weak drivers guide them through the
fight :

Can such opponents stand when we assail ? 556
Unite thy force, my friend, and we prevail."

The son of Venus to the counsel yields,
Then o'er their backs they spread their solid shields,
With brass refulgent the broad surface shined, 560
And thick bull hides the spacious concave lined.
Them Chromius follows, Aretus succeeds,
Each hopes the conquest of the lofty steeds ;
In vain, brave youths, with glorious hopes ye burn,
In vain advance ! not fated to return. 565

Unmoved, Automedon attends the fight,
Implores the Eternal, and collects his might.
Then turning to his friend, with dauntless mind :
"Oh keep the foaming coursers close behind !
Full on my shoulders let their nostrils blow, 570
For hard the fight, determined is the foe :
'Tis Hector comes ; and when he seeks the prize,
War knows no mean : he wins it, or he dies."

Then through the field he sends his voice aloud,
And calls the Ajaces from the warring crowd, 575
With great Atrides. "Hither turn," he said,
"Turn, where distress demands immediate aid ;
The dead, encircled by his friends, forego,
And save the living from a fiercer foe.
Unhelp'd we stand, unequal to engage 580
The force of Hector and Æneas' rage :

Yet mighty as they are, my force to prove
Is only mine; the event belongs to Jove."

He spoke, and high the sounding javelin flung,
Which pass'd the shield of Aretus the young; 585
It pierced his belt, emboss'd with curious art;
Then in the lower belly stuck the dart.

As when a ponderous axe, descending full,
Cleaves the broad forehead of some brawny bull;
Struck 'tween the horns, he springs with many a
bound, 590

Then tumbling rolls enormous on the ground:
Thus fell the youth; the air his soul received,
And the spear trembled as his entrails heaved.

Now at Automedon the Trojan foe
Discharged his lance; the meditated blow, 595
Stooping, he shunn'd; the javelin idly fled,
And hiss'd innoxious o'er the hero's head:
Deep rooted in the ground, the forceful spear
In long vibrations spent its fury there.

With clashing falchions now the chiefs had closed,
But each brave Ajax heard, and interposed; 601

Nor longer Hector with his Trojans stood,
But left their slain companion in his blood:
His arms Automedon divests, and cries,
"Accept, Patroclus, this mean sacrifice. 605
Thus have I soothed my griefs, and thus have paid,
Poor as it is, some offering to thy shade."

So looks the lion o'er a mangled boar,
All grim with rage, and horrible with gore.
High on the chariot at one bound he sprung. 610
And o'er his seat the bloody trophies hung.

And now Minerva, from the realms of air,
Descends impetuous, and renews the war;
For, pleased at length the Grecian arms to aid,
The Lord of thunders sent the blue-eyed maid. 615
As when high Jove, denouncing future wo,
O'er the dark clouds extends his purple bow,
(In sign of tempests from the troubled air,
Or, from the rage of man, destructive war,)

The drooping cattle dread the impending skies, 620
 And from his half-till'd field the labourer flies :
 In such a form the goddess round her drew
 A livid cloud, and to the battle flew.

Assuming Phœnix' shape, on earth she falls,
 And in his well-known voice to Sparta calls : 625
 "And lies Achilles' friend beloved by all,
 A prey to dogs beneath the Trojan wall ?

What shame to Greece for future times to tell !
 To thee the greatest, in whose cause he fell !"

"Oh chief ! oh father !" Atreus' son replies, 630
 "Oh full of days ! by long experience wise !

What more desires my soul, than here unmoved
 To guard the body of the man I loved ?
 Ah would Minerva send me strength to rear
 This wearied arm, and ward the storm of war ! 635
 But Hector, like the rage of fire, we dread,
 And Jove's own glories blaze around his head."

Pleased to be first of all the powers address'd,
 She breathes new vigour in her hero's breast,
 And fills with keen revenge, with fell despite, 640
 Desire of blood, and rage, and lust of fight.
 So burns the vengeful hornet, (soul all o'er,)
 Repulsed in vain, and thirsty still of gore,
 (Bold son of air and heat,) on angry wings
 Untamed, untired, he turns, attacks, and stings. 645
 Fired with like ardour, fierce Atrides flew,
 And sent his soul with every lance he threw.

There stood a Trojan not unknown to fame,
 Eetion's son, and Podes was his name ;
 With riches honour'd, and with courage bless'd, 650
 By Hector loved, his comrade and his guest :
 Through his broad belt the spear a passage found,
 And ponderous as he falls, his arms resound.

Sudden at Hector's side Apollo stood,
 Like Phænops, Asius' son, appear'd the god : 655
 (Asius the great, who held his wealthy reign
 In fair Abydos, by the rolling main.)

“Oh prince!” he cried, “oh foremost once in fame!

What Grecian now shall tremble at thy name?
Dost thou at length to Menelaus yield? 660

A chief once thought no terror of the field!
Yet singly, now, the long-disputed prize
He bears victorious, while our army flies.
By the same arm illustrious Podes bled;
The friend of Hector, unrevenged, is dead!” 665

This heard, o’er Hector spreads a cloud of wo,
Rage lifts his lance, and drives him on the foe.

But now the Eternal shook his sable shield,
That shaded Ide, and all the subject field,
Beneath its ample verge. A rolling cloud 670
Involved the mount; the thunder roar’d aloud;
The affrighted hills from their foundations nod,
And blaze beneath the lightnings of the god:
At one regard of his all-seeing eye,
The vanquish’d triumph, and the victors fly. 675

Then trembled Greece: the flight Peneleus led;
For as the brave Bæotian turn’d his head
To face the foe, Polydamas drew near,
And razed his shoulder with a shorten’d spear:
By Hector wounded, Leitus quits the plain, 680
Pierced through the wrist; and, raging with the
pain,

Grasps his once formidable lance in vain.

As Hector follow’d Idomen address’d
The flaming javelin to his manly breast;
The brittle point before his corslet yields, 685
Exulting Troy with clamour fills the fields:
High on his chariot as the Cretan stood,
The son of Priam whirl’d the missive wood;
But, erring from its aim, the impetuous spear
Struck to the dust the squire and charioteer 690
Of martial Merion: Cœranus his name,
Who left fair Lyctus for the fields of fame.
On foot bold Merion fought; and now, laid low,
Had graced the triumphs of his Trojan foe;

But the brave squire the ready coursers brought, 695
And with his life his master's safety bought.
Between his cheek and ear the weapon went,
The teeth it shatter'd, and the tongue it rent.
Prone from his seat he tumbles to the plain;
His dying hand forgets the falling rein: 700
This Merion reaches, bending from the car,
And urges to desert the hopeless war:
Idomeneus consents; the lash applies;
And the swift chariot to the navy flies.

Nor Ajax less the will of Heaven descried, 705
And conquest shifting to the Trojan side,
Turn'd by the hand of Jove. Then thus begun,
To Atreus' seed, the seed of Telamon:

"Alas! who sees not Jove's almighty hand
Transfers the glory to the Trojan band? 710
Whether the weak or strong discharge the dart,
He guides each arrow to a Grecian heart:
Not so our spears; incessant though they rain,
He suffers every lance to fall in vain.
Deserted of the god, yet let us try 715
What human strength and prudence can supply;
If yet this honour'd corse, in triumph borne,
May glad the fleets that hope not our return,
Who tremble yet, scarce rescued from their fates,
And still hear Hector thundering at their gates. 720
Some hero too must be despatch'd to bear
The mournful message to Pelides' ear;
For sure he knows not, distant on the shore,
His friend, his loved Patroclus, is no more.
But such a chief I spy not through the host: 725
The men, the steeds, the armies, all are lost
In general darkness. Lord of earth and air!
O King! O Father! hear my humble prayer:
Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore;
Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more: 730
If Greece must perish, we thy will obey,
But let us perish in the face of day."

With tears the hero spoke, and at his prayer
 The god relenting, clear'd the clouded air;
 Forth burst the sun with all-enlightening ray; 735
 The blaze of armour flash'd against the day.
 "Now, now, Atrides! cast around thy sight,
 If yet Antilochus survives the fight,
 Let him to great Achilles' ear convey
 The fatal news." Atrides hastes away. 740

So turns the lion from the nightly fold,
 Though high in courage, and with hunger bold,
 Long gall'd by herdsmen, and long vex'd by hounds,
 Stiff with fatigue, and fretted sore with wounds;
 The darts fly round him from a hundred hands, 745
 And the red terrors of the blazing brands:
 Till late, reluctant, at the dawn of day
 Sour he departs, and quits the untasted prey.
 So moved Atrides from his dangerous place
 With weary limbs, but with unwilling pace; 750
 The foe, he fear'd, might yet Patroclus gain,
 And much admonish'd, much adjured his train:

"Oh guard these relics to your charge consign'd,
 And bear the merits of the dead in mind;
 How skill'd he was in each obliging art; 755
 The mildest manners, and the gentlest heart:
 He was, alas! but fate decreed his end;
 In death a hero, as in life a friend!"

So parts the chief; from rank to rank he flew,
 And round on all sides sent his piercing view. 760
 As the bold bird, endued with sharpest eye,
 Of all that wing the mid aerial sky,
 The sacred eagle, from his walks above
 Looks down, and sees the distant thicket move;
 Then stoops, and, sousing on the quivering hare, 765
 Snatches his life amid the clouds of air:
 Not with less quickness his exerted sight
 Pass'd this and that way through the ranks of
 fight;

Till on the left the chief he sought he found,
 Cheering his men, and spreading deaths around. 770

To him the king: "Beloved of Jove! draw near,
 For sadder tidings never touch'd thy ear.
 Thy eyes have witness'd what a fatal turn;
 How Ilion triumphs, and the Achaians mourn!
 This is not all; Patroclus, on the shore 775
 Now pale and dead, shall succour Greece no more.
 Fly to the fleet, this instant fly, and tell
 The sad Achilles how his loved one fell;
 He too may haste the naked corse to gain;
 The arms are Hector's, who despoil'd the slain."

The youthful warrior heard with silent wo, 781
 From his fair eyes the tears began to flow;
 Big with the mighty grief, he strove to say
 What sorrow dictates, but no word found way.
 To brave Laodocus his arms he flung, 785
 Who, near him wheeling, drove his steeds along;
 Then ran, the mournful message to impart,
 With tearful eyes and with dejected heart.

Swift fled the youth: nor Menelaus stands, 789
 Though sore distress'd, to aid the Pylian bands;
 But bids bold Thrasymede those troops sustain:
 Himself returns to his Patroclus slain.

"Gone is Antilochus," the hero said,
 "But hope not, warriors, for Achilles' aid:
 Though fierce his rage, unbounded be his wo, 795
 Unarm'd, he fights not with the Trojan foe.
 'Tis in our hands alone our hopes remain,
 'Tis our own vigour must the dead regain,
 And save ourselves, while with impetuous hate
 Troy pours along, and this way rolls our fate." 800

"'Tis well," said Ajax; "be it then thy care,
 With Merion's aid, the weighty corse to rear;
 Myself and my bold brother will sustain
 The shock of Hector and his charging train;
 Nor fear we armies, fighting side by side: 805
 What Troy can dare, we have already tried,
 Have tried it, and have stood." The hero said.
 High from the ground the warriors heave the dead.

A general clamour rises at the sight :
Loud shout the Trojans, and renew the fight. 810
Not fiercer rush along the gloomy wood,
With rage insatiate and with thirst of blood,
Voracious hounds, that many a length before
Their furious hunters, drive the wounded boar ;
But, if the savage turns his glaring eye, 815
They howl aloof, and round the forest fly.
Thus on retreating Greece the Trojans pour,
Wave their thick falchions, and their javelins
shower ;
But Ajax turning, to their fears they yield,
All pale they tremble, and forsake the field. 820
While thus aloft the hero's corse they bear,
Behind them rages all the storm of war ;
Confusion, tumult, horror, o'er the throng
Of men, steeds, chariots, urged the rout along :
Less fierce the winds with rising flames conspire,
To whelm some city under waves of fire ; 826
Now sink in gloomy clouds the proud abodes,
Now crack the blazing temples of the gods ;
The rumbling torrent through the ruin rolls,
And sheets of smoke mount heavy to the poles. 830
The heroes sweat beneath their honour'd load :
As when two mules, along the rugged road,
From the steep mountain with exerted strength
Drag some vast beam, or mast's unwieldy length,
Inly they groan, big drops of sweat distil, 835
The enormous timber lumbering down the hill :
So these. Behind, the bulk of Ajax stands,
And breaks the torrent of the rushing bands.
Thus when a river swell'd with sudden rains
Spreads his broad waters o'er the level plains, 840
Some interposing hill the stream divides,
And breaks its force, and turns the winding tides.
Still close they follow, close the rear engage ;
Æneas storms, and Hector foams with rage :
While Greece a heavy thick retreat maintains, 845
Wedged in one body, like a flight of cranes,

That shriek incessant while the falcon, hung
High on poised pinions, threats their callow young.
So from the Trojan chiefs the Grecians fly,
Such the wild terror, and the mingled cry: 850
Within, without the trench, and all the way,
Strew'd in bright heaps, their arms and armour lay;
Such horror Jove impress'd ! yet still proceeds
The work of death, and still the battle bleeds.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Grief of Achilles, and new Armour made him by Vulcan.

THE news of the death of Patroclus is brought to Achilles by Antilochus—Thetis, hearing his lamentations, comes with all her sea-nymphs to comfort him—The speeches of the mother and son on this occasion—Iris appears to Achilles by the command of Juno, and orders him to show himself at the head of the intrenchments—The sight of him turns the fortune of the day, and the body of Patroclus is carried off by the Greeks—The Trojans call a council, where Hector and Polydamas disagree in their opinions; but the advice of the former prevails to remain encamped in the field—The grief of Achilles over the body of Patroclus—Thetis goes to the palace of Vulcan to obtain new arms for her son—The description of the wonderful works of Vulcan; and, lastly, that noble one of the shield of Achilles.—[The latter part of the nine-and-twentieth day, and the night ensuing, take up this book. The scene is at Achilles' tent on the seashore, from whence it changes to the palace of Vulcan.]

Thus like the rage of fire the combat burns,
And now it rises, now it sinks, by turns.
Meanwhile, where Hellespont's broad waters flow,
Stood Nestor's son, the messenger of wo:
There sat Achilles, shaded by his sails, 5
On hoisted yards extended to the gales;
Pensive he sat; for all that fate design'd
Rose in sad prospect to his boding mind.
Thus to his soul he said: "Ah! what constrains
The Greeks, late victors, now to quit the plains? 10

Is this the day, which Heaven so long ago
 Ordain'd, to sink me with the weight of wo,
 So Thetis warn'd, when by a Trojan hand
 The bravest of the Myrmidonian band
 Should lose the light? Fulfill'd is that decree; 15
 Fall'n is the warrior, and Patroclus he!

In vain I charged him soon to quit the plain,
 And warn'd to shun Hectorean force in vain!"

Thus while he thinks, Antilochus appears,
 And tells the melancholy tale with tears. 20

"Sad tidings, son of Peleus! thou must hear;
 And wretched I, the unwilling messenger!
 Dead is Patroclus! For his corse they fight,
 His naked corse; his arms are Hector's right."

A sudden horror shot through all the chief, 25
 And wrapp'd his senses in the cloud of grief;

Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread
 The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head;

His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
 Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears: 30

On the hard soil his groaning breast he threw,
 And roll'd and grovell'd, as to earth he grew.

The virgin captives, with disorder'd charms,
 (Won by his own, or by Patroclus' arms,)

Rush'd from the tents with cries; and gathering
 round, 35

Beat their white breasts, and fainted on the ground:

While Nestor's son sustains a manlier part,
 And mourns the warrior with a warrior's heart;

Hangs on his arms, amid his frantic wo,
 And oft prevents the meditated blow. 40

Far in the deep abysses of the main.

With hoary Nereus, and the watery train,

The mother goddess from her crystal throne

Heard his loud cries, and answer'd groan for groan.

The circling Nereids with their mistress weep, 45

And all the sea-green sisters of the deep.

Thalia, Glauce, every watery name,

Nesæa mild, and silver Spio came:

Cymothoe and Cymodoce were nigh,
And the blue languish of soft Alia's eye. 50
Their locks Actæa and Limnoria rear,
Then Proto, Doris, Panope appear,
Thoa, Pherusa, Doto, Melita;
Agave gentle, and Amphithoe gay:
Next Callianira, Callianassa show 55
Their sister looks; Dexamene the slow,
And swift Dynamene, now cut the tides:
Iæra now the verdant wave divides:
Nemertes with Apseudes lifts the head,
Bright Galatea quits her pearly bed; 60
These Orythia, Clymene, attend,
Mæra, Amphinome, the train extend,
And black Janira, and Janassa fair,
And Amatheia with her amber hair.
All these, and all that deep in ocean held 65
Their sacred seats, the glimmering grotto fill'd;
Each beat her ivory breast with silent wo,
Till Thetis' sorrows thus began to flow:
"Hear me, and judge, ye sisters of the main!
How just a cause has Thetis to complain! 70
How wretched, were I mortal, were my fate!
How more than wretched in the immortal state!
Sprung from my bed a godlike hero came,
The bravest far that ever bore the name;
Like some fair olive, by my careful hand 75
He grew, he flourish'd, and adorn'd the land:
To Troy I sent him; but the fates ordain
He never, never must return again.
So short a space the light of heaven to view,
So short, alas! and fill'd with anguish too! 80
Hear how his sorrows echo through the shore!
I cannot ease them, but I must deplore;
I go at least to bear a tender part,
And mourn my loved one with a mother's heart."
She said, and left the caverns of the main, 85
All bathed in tears; the melancholy train

Attend her way : wide opening part the tides,
While the long pomp the silver wave divides.
Approaching now, they touch'd the Trojan land ;
Then, two by two, ascended up the strand. 90
The immortal mother, standing close beside
Her mournful offspring, to his sighs replied ;
Along the coast their mingled clamours ran,
And thus the silver-footed dame began :

“ Why mourns my son ? thy late preferr'd re-
quest 95

The god has granted, and the Greeks distress'd :
Why mourns my son ? thy anguish let me share ;
Reveal the cause, and trust a parent's care.”

He, deeply groaning : “ To this cureless grief
Not e'en the Thunderer's favour brings relief. 100

Patroclus ! ah ! say, goddess, can I boast
A pleasure now ? revenge itself is lost ;
Patroclus, loved of all my martial train,
Beyond mankind, beyond myself, is slain ;
Lost are those arms the gods themselves bestow'd
On Peleus : Hector bears the glorious load. 106

Cursed be that day, when all the powers above
Thy charms submitted to a mortal love !
Oh hadst thou still, a sister of the main,
Pursued the pleasures of the watery reign, 110
And happier Peleus, less ambitious, led
A mortal beauty to his equal bed !

Ere the sad fruit of thy unhappy womb
Had caused such sorrows past, and woes to come !
For soon, alas ! that wretched offspring slain, 115
New woes, new sorrows shall create again.

’Tis not in fate the alternate now to give ;
Patroclus dead, Achilles hates to live.
Let me revengé it on proud Hector's heart,
Let his last spirit smoke upon my dart ; 120
On these conditions will I breathe : till then,
I blush to walk among the race of men.”

- A flood of tears at this the goddess shed.

“ Ah, then, I see thee dying, see thee dead !

When Hector falls, thou diest." "Let Hector die,
And let me fall!" Achilles made reply. 126
"Far lies Patroclus from his native plain!
He fell, and falling, wish'd my aid in vain.
Ah, then, since from this miserable day
I cast all hope of my return away; 130
Since unrevenged, a hundred ghosts demand
The fate of Hector from Achilles' hand;
Since here, for brutal courage far renown'd,
I live an idle burden to the ground;
(Others in council famed for nobler skill, 135
More useful to preserve than I to kill;)
Let me—but oh! ye gracious powers above!
Wrath and revenge from men and gods remove:
Far, far too dear to every mortal breast,
Sweet to the soul as honey to the taste: 140
Gathering like vapours of a noxious kind
From fiery blood, and darkening all the mind.
Me Agamemnon urged to deadly hate:
'Tis past—I quell it; I resign to fate.
Yes—I will meet the murderer of my friend: 145
Or, if the gods ordain it, meet my end.
The stroke of fate the bravest cannot shun;
'The great Alcides, Jove's unequall'd son,
To Juno's hate at length resign'd his breath,
And sunk the victim of all-conquering death. 150
So shall Achilles fall! stretch'd pale and dead,
No more the Grecian hope, or Trojan dread!
Let me, this instant, rush into the fields,
And reap what glory life's short harvest yields.
Shall I not force some widow'd dame to tear 155
With frantic hands her long dishevell'd hair?
Shall I not force her breast to heave with sighs,
And the soft tears to trickle from her eyes?
Yes, I shall give the fair those mournful charms—
In vain you hold me—hence! my arms, my arms!
Soon shall the sanguine torrent spread so wide, 161
That all shall know Achilles swells the tide."

“ My son,” cerulean Thetis made reply,
To fate submitting with a secret sigh,
“ The host to succour, and thy friends to save, 165
Is worthy thee, the duty of the brave.
But canst thou naked issue to the plains?
Thy radiant arms the Trojan foe detains.
Insulting Hector bears the spoils on high,
But vainly glories, for his fate is nigh. 170
Yet, yet a while thy generous ardour stay;
Assured, I meet thee at the dawn of day,
Charged with refulgent arms, a glorious load,
Vulcanian arms, the labour of a god.”

Then turning to the daughters of the main, 175
The goddess thus dismiss’d her azure train :

“ Ye sister Nereids ! to your deeps descend ;
Haste, and our father’s sacred seat attend ;
I go to find the architect divine,
Where vast Olympus’ starry summits shine : 180
So tell our hoary sire.” This charge she gave :
‘ The sea-green sisters plunge beneath the wave :
Thetis once more ascends the bless’d abodes,
And treads the brazen threshold of the gods.

And now the Greeks, from furious Hector’s force,
Urge to broad Hellespont their headlong course : 186
Nor yet their chiefs Patroclus’ body bore
Safe through the tempest to the tented shore.
The horse, the foot, with equal fury join’d,
Pour’d on the rear, and thunder’d close behind ; 190
And like a flame through fields of ripen’d corn,
The rage of Hector o’er the ranks was borne.
Thrice the slain hero by the foot he drew ;
Thrice to the skies the Trojan clamours flew ;
As oft the Ajaces his assault sustain ; 195
But check’d, he turns ; repulsed, attacks again.
With fiercer shouts his lingering troops he fires,
Nor yields a step, nor from his post retires ;
So watchful shepherds strive to force, in vain,
The hungry lion from a carcass slain. 200

Ev'n yet Patroclus had he borne away,
 And all the glories of the extended day,
 Had not high Juno from the realms of air,
 Secret, despatched her trusty messenger.
 The various goddess of the showery bow 205
 Shot in a whirlwind to the shore below ;
 To great Achilles at his ships she came,
 And thus began the many-colour'd dame :

" Rise, son of Peleus ! rise, divinely brave !
 Assist the combat, and Patroclus save : 210
 For him the slaughter to the fleet they spread,
 And fall by mutual wounds around the dead.
 To drag him back to Troy the foe contends :
 Nor with his death the rage of Hector ends :
 A prey to dogs he dooms the corse to lie, 215
 And marks the place to fix his head on high.
 Rise, and prevent, if yet you think of fame,
 Thy friend's disgrace, thy own eternal shame !"

" Who sends thee, goddess, from the ethereal
 skies !"

Achilles thus : and Iris thus replies : 220
 " I come, Pelides, from the queen of Jove,
 The immortal empress of the realms above ;
 Unknown to him who sits remote on high,
 Unknown to all the synod of the sky."

" Thou comest in vain," he cries, with fury warm'd ;
 " Arms I have none, and can I fight unarm'd ? 226
 Unwilling as I am, of force I stay
 Till Thetis bring me at the dawn of day
 Vulcanian arms : what other can I wield,
 Except the mighty Telamonian shield ? 230
 That, in my friend's defence, has Ajax spread,
 While his strong lance around him heaps the dead :
 The gallant chief defends Menœtius' son,
 And does what his Achilles should have done."

" Thy want of arms," said Iris, " well we know
 But, though unarm'd, yet clad in terrors, go ! 236
 Let but Achilles o'er yon trench appear,
 Proud Troy shall tremble, and consent to fear :

Greece, from one glance of that tremendous eye,
Shall take new courage, and disdain to fly." 240

She spoke, and pass'd in air. The hero rose;
Her ægis Pallas o'er his shoulders throws;
Around his brows a golden cloud she spread;
A stream of glory flamed above his head.

As when from some beleaguer'd town arise 245

The smokes, high curling to the shaded skies;
(Seen from some island, o'er the main afar,
When men distress'd hang out the sign of war;)
Soon as the sun in ocean hides his rays,

Thick on the hills the flaming beacons blaze; 250

With long projected beams the seas are bright,
And heaven's high arch reflects the ruddy light:
So from Achilles' head the splendours rise,
Reflecting blaze on blaze against the skies.

Forth march'd the chief, and, distant from the crowd,
High on the rampart raised his voice aloud; 256

With her own shout Minerva swells the sound;
Troy starts astonish'd, and the shores rebound.

As the loud trumpet's brazen mouth from far
With shrilling clangour sounds the alarm of war,
Struck from the walls, the echoes float on high, 261

And the round bulwarks and thick towers reply;
So high his brazen voice the hero rear'd:

Hosts drop their arms, and tremble as they heard;
And back the chariots roll, and coursers bound, 265

And steeds and men lie mingled on the ground.

Aghast they see the living lightnings play,
And turn their eyeballs from the flashing ray.

Thrice from the trench his dreadful voice he raised;
And thrice they fled, confounded and amazed. 270

Twelve in the tumult wedged, untimely rush'd
On their own spears, by their own chariots crush'd:
While shielded from the darts, the Greeks obtain
The long-contended carcass of the slain.

A lofty bier the breathless warrior bears: 275
Around, his sad companions melt in tears.

But chief Achilles, bending down his head,
 Pours unavailing sorrows o'er the dead,
 Whom late triumphant with his steeds and car,
 He sent refulgent to the field of war ; 280
 (Unhappy change !) now senseless, pale, he found,
 Stretch'd forth, and gash'd with many a gaping
 wound.

Meantime, unwearied with his heavenly way,
 In ocean's waves the unwilling light of day
 Quench'd his red orb, at Juno's high command, 285
 And from their labours eased the Achaian band.
 The frightened Trojans (panting from the war,
 Their steeds unharness'd from the weary car)
 A sudden council call'd ; each chief appear'd
 In haste, and standing ; for to sit they fear'd. 290
 'Twas now no season for prolong'd debate ;
 They saw Achilles, and in him their fate.
 Silent they stood : Polydamas at last,
 Skill'd to discern the future by the past,
 The son of Panthus thus express'd his fears : 295
 (The friend of Hector and of equal years ;
 The selfsame night to both a being gave,
 One wise in council, one in action brave :)

“ In free debate, my friends, your sentence speak :
 For me, I move before the morning break, 300
 To raise our camp : too dangerous here our post,
 Far from Troy walls, and on a naked coast.
 I deem'd not Greece so dreadful, while engaged
 In mutual feuds her king and hero raged ;
 Then, while we hoped our armies might prevail, 305
 We boldly camp'd beside a thousand sail.
 I dread Pelides now : his rage of mind
 Not long continues to the shores confined,
 Nor to the fields, where long in equal fray
 Contending nations won and lost the day ; 310
 For Troy, for Troy, shall henceforth be the strife,
 And the hard contest not for fame, but life.
 Haste then to Ilion, while the favouring night
 Detains those terrors, keeps that arm from fight :

If but the morrow's sun behold us here, 315
That arm, those terrors, we shall feel, not fear;
And hearts that now disdain, shall leap with joy,
If Heaven permit them then to enter Troy.
Let not my fatal prophecy be true,
Nor what I tremble but to think, ensue. 320
Whatever be our fate, yet let us try
What force of thought and reason can supply;
Let us on counsel for our guard depend;
The town her gates and bulwarks shall defend.
When morning dawns, our well-appointed powers,
Array'd in arms, shall line the lofty towers. 326
Let the fierce hero then, when fury calls,
Vent his mad vengeance on our rocky walls,
Or fetch a thousand circles round the plain,
'Till his spent coursers seek the fleet again: 330
So may his rage be tired, and labour'd down;
And dogs shall tear him ere he sack the town."
"Return!" said Hector, fired with stern disdain,
"What! coop whole armies in our walls again?
Was't not enough, ye valiant warriors, say, 335
Nine years imprison'd in those towers ye lay?
Wide o'er the world was Ilion famed of old
For brass exhaustless, and for mines of gold;
But while inglorious in her walls we staid,
Sunk were her treasures, and her stores decay'd:
The Phrygians now her scatter'd spoils enjoy, 441
And proud Mæonia wastes the fruits of Troy.
Great Jove at length my arms to conquest calls,
And shuts the Grecians in their wooden walls:
Darest thou dispirit whom the gods incite? 345
Flies any Trojan? I shall stop his flight.
To better counsel then attention lend;
Take due refreshment, and the watch attend
If there be one whose riches cost him care,
Forth let him bring them for the troops to share;
'Tis better generously bestow'd on those, 351
Than left the plunder of our country's foes.

Soon as the morn the purple orient warms,
Fierce on yon navy will we pour our arms.
If great Achilles rise in all his might, 355
His be the danger : I shall stand the fight.
Honour, ye gods ! or let me gain, or give !
And live he glorious, whosoe'er shall live !
Mars is our common lord, alike to all :
And oft the victor triumphs, but to fall." 360

The shouting host in loud applauses join'd :
So Pallas robb'd the many of their mind ;
To their own sense condemn'd, and left to choose
The worst advice, the better to refuse.

While the long night extends her sable reign, 365
Around Patroclus mourn'd the Grecian train.
Stern in superior grief Pelides stood ;
Those slaughtering arms so used to bathe in blood,
Now clasp'd his clay-cold limbs ; then gushing start
The tears, and sighs burst from his swelling heart.
The lion thus, with dreadful anguish stung, 371
Roars through the desert, and demands his young ;
When the grim savage, to his rifled den
Too late returning, snuffs the track of men,
And o'er the vales and o'er the forest bounds ; 375
His clamorous grief the bellowing wood resounds.
So grieves Achilles ; and impetuous vents,
To all his Myrmidons, his loud laments.

" In what vain promise, gods ! did I engage,
When, to console Menœtius' feeble age, 380
I vow'd his much-loved offspring to restore,
Charged with rich spoils, to fair Opuntia's shore ?
But mighty Jove cuts short, with just disdain,
The long, long views of poor, designing man !
One fate the warrior and the friend shall strike, 385
And Troy's black sands must drink our blood alike :
Me too a wretched mother shall deplore,
An aged father never see me more !
Yet, my Patroclus ! yet a space I stay,
Then swift pursue thee on the darksome way. 390

Ere thy dear relics in the grave are laid
 Shall Hector's head be offer'd to thy shade ;
 That, with his arms, shall hang before thy shrine ,
 And twelve the noblest of the Trojan line,
 Sacred to vengeance, by this hand expire ; 395
 Their lives effused around thy flaming pyre.

Thus let me lie till then ; thus, closely press'd,
 Bathe thy cold face, and sob upon thy breast !
 While Trojan captives here thy mourners stay,
 Weep all the night, and murmur all the day : 400
 Spoils of my arms, and thine ; when, wasting wide,
 Our swords kept time, and conquer'd side by side."

He spoke, and bid the sad attendants round
 Cleanse the pale corse, and wash each honour'd
 wound.

A massy caldron of stupendous frame 405
 They brought, and placed it o'er the rising flame :
 Then heap the lighted wood ; the flame divides
 Beneath the vase, and climbs around the sides :
 In its wide womb they pour the rushing stream ;
 The boiling water bubbles to the brim. 410

The body then they bathe with pious toil,
 Embalm the wounds, anoint the limbs with oil,
 High on a bed of state extended laid,
 And decent cover'd with a linen shade ;
 Last o'er the dead the milk-white veil they threw ;
 That done, their sorrows and their sighs renew. 416

Meanwhile to Juno, in the realms above,
 His wife and sister, spoke almighty Jove.
 " At last thy will prevails : great Peleus' son
 Rises in arms ; such grace thy Greeks have won.
 Say, for I know not, is their race divine, 420
 And thou the mother of that martial line ?"

" What words are these ?" the imperial dame re-
 plies,
 While anger flashed from her majestic eyes :
 " Succour like this a mortal arm might lend, 425
 And such success mere human wit attend :

And shall not I, the second power above,
Heaven's queen, and consort of the thundering Jove,
Say, shall not I, one nation's fate command,
Not wreak my vengeance on one guilty land?" 430

So they. Meanwhile, the silver-footed dame
Reach'd the Vulcanian dome, eternal frame!
High eminent amid the works divine,
Where heaven's far-beaming brazen mansions shine.
There the lame architect the goddess found, 435
Obscure in smoke, his forges flaming round,
While bathed in sweat from fire to fire he flew;
And puffing loud, the roaring bellows blew.
That day no common task his labour claim'd:
Full twenty tripods for his hall he framed, 440
'That placed on living wheels of massy gold,
Wondrous to tell, instinct with spirit roll'd
From place to place, around the bless'd abodes,
Self-moved, obedient to the beck of gods:
For their fair handles now, o'erwrought with flowers,
In moulds prepared, the glowing ore he pours. 446
Just as responsive to his thought the frame
Stood prompt to move, the azure goddess came:
Charis, his spouse, a grace divinely fair,
With purple fillets round her braided hair, 450
Observed her entering; her soft hand she press'd,
And smiling, thus the watery queen address'd:

"What, goddess, this unusual favour draws?
All hail, and welcome! whatsoe'er the cause:
Till now a stranger, in a happy hour 455
Approach, and taste the dainties of the bower."

High on a throne, with stars of silver graced,
And various artifice, the queen she placed;
A footstool at her feet; then calling, said:
"Vulcan, draw near; 'tis Thetis asks your aid." 460
"Thetis," replied the god, "our powers may claim,
An ever-dear, an ever-honour'd name!
When my proud mother hurl'd me from the sky,
(My awkward form, it seems, displeased her eye,)

She, and Eurynome, my griefs redress'd, 465
 And soft received me on their silver breast.
 Ev'n then, these arts employ'd my infant thought;
 Chains, bracelets, pendants, all their toys I wrought.
 Nine years kept secret in the dark abode,
 Secure I lay conceal'd from man and god: 470
 Deep in a cavern'd rock my days were led;
 The rushing ocean murmur'd o'er my head.
 Now since her presence glads our mansion, say,
 For such desert what service can I pay?
 Vouchsafe, oh Thetis! at our board to share 475
 The genial rites and hospitable fare;
 While I the labours of the forge forego,
 And bid the roaring bellows cease to blow."

Then from his anvil the lame artist rose;
 Wide with distorted legs oblique he goes 480
 And stills the bellows, and, in order laid,
 Locks in their chests the instruments of trade.
 Then with a sponge the sooty workman dress'd
 His brawny arms imbrown'd, and hairy breast.
 With his huge sceptre graced, and red attire, 485
 Came halting forth the sovereign of the fire:
 The monarch's steps two female forms uphold,
 That moved, and breathed, in animated gold:
 To whom was voice, and sense, and science given
 Of works divine, such wonders are in heaven! 490
 On these supported, with unequal gait,
 He reach'd the throne where pensive Thetis sate;
 There plac'd beside her on the shining frame,
 He thus address'd the silver-footed dame:

"Thee, welcome goddess, what occasion calls,
 So long a stranger, to these honour'd walls? 496
 'Tis thine, fair Thetis, the command to lay,
 And Vulcan's joy and duty to obey."

To whom the mournful mother thus replies:
 (The crystal drops stood trembling in her eyes:) 500
 "Oh Vulcan! say, was ever breast divine
 So pierced with sorrows, so o'erwhelm'd as mine?

Of all the goddesses, did Jove prepare
For Thetis only such a weight of care?
I, only I, of all the wat'ry race, 505
By force subjected to a man's embrace,
Who sinking now with age and sorrow, pays
The mighty fine imposed on length of days.
Sprung from my bed, a godlike hero came,
The bravest sure that ever bore the name; 510
Like some fair plant beneath my careful hand
He grew, he flourish'd, and he graced the land:
To Troy I sent him; but his native shore
Never, ah never, shall receive him more!
(Ev'n while he lives, he wastes with secret wo;) 515
Nor I, a goddess, can retard the blow!
Robb'd of the prize, the Grecian suffrage gave,
The king of nations forced his royal slave:
For this he grieved; and, till the Greeks oppress'd
Required his arm, he sorrow'd unredress'd. 520
Large gifts they promise, and their elders send;
In vain—he arms not, but permits his friend
His arms, his steeds, his forces, to employ;
He marches, combats, almost conquers Troy.
Then slain by Phœbus, (Hector had the name,) 525
At once resigns his armour, life, and fame
But thou, in pity, by my prayer be won:
Grace with immortal arms this shortlived son,
And to the field in martial pomp restore,
To shine with glory till he shines no more!" 530
To her the artist god: "Thy griefs resign,
Secure, what Vulcan can, is ever thine.
Oh could I hide from him the fates as well,
Or with these hands the cruel stroke repel,
As I shall forge most envied arms, the gaze 535
Of wondering ages, and the world's amaze!"
Thus having said, the father of the fires
To the black labours of his forge retires.
Soon as he bade them blow, the bellows turn'd
Their iron mouths; and where the furnace burn'd,

Resounding breathed : at once the blast expires, 541
 And twenty forges catch at once the fires ;
 Just as the god directs, now loud, now low,
 'They raise a tempest, or they gently blow.
 In hissing flames huge silver bars are roll'd, 545
 And stubborn brass, and tin, and solid gold :
 Before, deep fix'd, the eternal anvils stand ;
 The ponderous hammer loads his better hand,
 His left with tongs turns the vex'd metal round,
 And thick, strong strokes, the doubling vaults re-
 bound. 550

Then first he form'd the immense and solid shield ;
 Rich various artifice emblaz'd the field ;
 Its utmost verge a threefold circle bound ;
 A silver chain suspends the massy round ;
 Five ample plates the broad expanse compose, 555
 And godlike labours on the surface rose.
 There shone the image of the master mind :
 There heaven, there earth, there ocean he design'd ;
 The unwearied sun, the moon completely round ;
 The starry lights that heaven's high convex crown'd .
 The Pleiads, Hyads, with the northern team ; 561
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam ;
 To which, around the axle of the sky,
 The Bear revolving points his golden eye,
 Still shines exalted on the ethereal plain, 565
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.

'Two cities radiant on the shield appear,
 The image one of peace, and one of war.
 Here sacred pomp and genial feast delight,
 And solemn dance, and Hymeneal rite ; 570
 Along the street the new-made brides are led,
 With torches flaming, to the nuptial bed :
 The youthful dancers in a circle bound
 To the soft flute, and cittern's silver sound :
 Through the fair streets, the matrons in a row 575
 Stand in their porches, and enjoy the show.

There, in the forum swarm a numerous train,
 The subject of debate, a townsman slain :

One pleads the fine discharged, which one denied,
And bade the public and the laws decide : 580
The witness is produced on either hand :
For this, or that, the partial people stand :
The appointed heralds still the noisy bands,
And form a ring, with sceptres in their hands ;
On seats of stone within the sacred place 585
The reverend elders nodded o'er the case ;
Alternate, each the attesting sceptre took,
And, rising solemn, each his sentence spoke.
Two golden talents lay amid, in sight,
The prize of him who best adjudged the right. 590
Another part (a prospect differing far)
Glow'd with refulgent arms and horrid war.
Two mighty hosts a leaguer'd town embrace,
And one would pillage, one would burn the place.
Meantime, the townsmen, arm'd with silent care,
A secret ambush on the foe prepare : 596
Their wives, their children, and the watchful band
Of trembling parents, on the turrets stand.
They march ; by Pallas and by Mars made bold :
Gold were their gods, their radiant garments gold, 600
And gold their armour : these their squadron led,
August, divine, superior by the head !
A place for ambush fit, they found, and stood
Cover'd with shields, beside a silver flood.
Two spies at distance lurk, and watchful seem 605
If sheep or oxen seek the winding stream.
Soon the white flocks proceeded o'er the plains,
And steers slow moving, and two shepherd swains ;
Behind them, piping on their reeds, they go,
Nor fear an ambush, nor suspect a foe. 610
In arms the glittering squadron rising round,
Rush sudden ! hills of slaughter heap the ground ;
Whole flocks and herds lie bleeding on the plains,
And, all amid them, dead, the shepherd swains !
The bellowing oxen the besiegers hear ; 615
They rise, take horse, approach, and meet the war ;

They fight, they fall, beside the silver flood;
The waving silver seem'd to blush with blood.
There Tumult, there Contention, stood confess'd ;
One rear'd a dagger at a captive breast, 620
One held a living foe, that freshly bled
With new-made wounds ; another dragg'd a dead :
Now here, now there, the carcasses they tore :
Fate stalk'd amid them, grim with human gore :
And the whole war came out, and met the eye ; 625
And each bold figure seem'd to live, or die.

A field deep furrow'd, next the god design'd,
The third time labour'd by the sweating hind :
The shining shares full many ploughmen guide,
And turn their crooked yokes on every side. 630
Still as at either end they wheel around,
The master meets them with his goblet crown'd ;
The hearty draught rewards, renews their toil,
Then back the turning ploughshares cleave the soil :
Behind, the rising earth in ridges roll'd, 635
And sable look'd, though form'd of molten gold.

Another field rose high with waving grain :
With bended sickles stand the reaper train ;
Here stretch'd in ranks the levell'd swarths are
found,
Sheaves heap'd on sheaves, here thicken up the
ground. 640

With sweeping stroke the mowers strew the lands ;
The gatherers follow, and collect in bands ;
And last the children, in whose arms are borne
(Too short to gripe them) the brown sheaves of corn.
The rustic monarch of the field describes, 645
With silent glee, the heaps around him rise.
A ready banquet on the turf is laid,
Beneath an ample oak's expanded shade.
The victim ox the sturdy youth prepare ;
The reapers' due repast, the women's care. 650

Next, ripe in yellow gold, a vineyard shines,
Bent with the ponderous harvest of its vines ;

A deeper die the dangling clusters show,
And, curl'd on silver props, in order glow :
A darker metal mix'd, intrench'd the place ; 655
And pales of glittering tin the enclosure grace.
To this, one pathway gently winding leads,
Where march a train with baskets on their heads,
(Fair maids, and blooming youths,) that smiling bear
The purple product of the autumnal year. 660

To these a youth awakes the warbling strings,
Whose tender lay the fate of Linus sings ;
In measured dance behind him move the train,
Tune soft the voice, and answer to the strain.

Here, herds of oxen march, erect and bold, 665
Rear high their horns, and seem to low in gold,
And speed to meadows on whose sounding shores
A rapid torrent through the rushes roars :
Four golden herdsmen as their guardians stand,
And nine sour dogs complete the rustic band. 670
Two lions rushing from the wood appear'd
And seized a bull, the master of the herd :
He roar'd : in vain the dogs, the men withstood ;
They tore his flesh, and drank the sable blood.
The dogs (oft cheer'd in vain) desert the prey, 675
Dread the grim terrors, and at distance bay.

Next this, the eye the art of Vulcan leads
Deep through fair forests, and a length of meads ;
And stalls, and folds, and scatter'd cots between ;
And fleecy flocks, that whiten all the scene. 680

A figured dance succeeds : such once was seen
In lofty Gnossus ; for the Cretan queen,
Form'd by Dædalean art : a comely band
Of youths and maidens, bounding hand in hand :
The maids in soft simars of linen dress'd ; 685
The youths all graceful in the glossy vest :
Of those the locks with flowery wreaths enroll'd ;
Of these the sides adorn'd with swords of gold,
That glittering gay, from silver belts depend.
Now all at once they rise, at once descend 690

With well-taught feet : now shape, in oblique ways,
Confusedly regular, the moving maze :

Now forth at once, too swift for sight, they spring,
And undistinguish'd blend the flying ring :

So whirls a wheel, in giddy circle toss'd, 695

And rapid as it runs, the single spokes are lost.

The gazing multitudes admire around :

Two active tumblers in the centre bound ;

Now high, now low, their pliant limbs they bend :

And general songs the sprightly revel end. 700

Thus the broad shield complete the artist crown'd

With his last hand, and pour'd the ocean round :

In living silver seem'd the waves to roll,

And beat the buckler's verge, and bound the whole.

This done, whate'er a warriors use requires, 705

He forged ; the cuirass that outshone the fires,

The greaves of ductile tin, the helm impress'd

With various sculpture, and the golden crest.

At Thetis' feet the finish'd labour lay ;

She, as a falcon, cuts the aerial way, 710

Swift from Olympus' snowy summit flies,

And bears the blazing present through the skies.

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon.

THETIS brings to her son the armour made by Vulcan—She preserves the body of his friend from corruption, and commands him to assemble the army, to declare his resentment at an end—Agamemnon and Achilles are solemnly reconciled : the speeches, presents, and ceremonies on that occasion—Achilles is with great difficulty persuaded to refrain from the battle till the troops have refreshed themselves, by the advice of Ulysses—The presents are conveyed to the tent of Achilles, where Briseis laments over the body of Patroclus—The hero obstinately refuses all repast, and gives himself up to lamentations for his friend—Minerva descends to strengthen him, by the order of Jupiter—He arms for the fight : his appearance described—He addresses himself to his horses, and reproaches them with the death of Patroclus—One of them is miraculously endued with voice, and inspired to prophesy his fate ; but the hero, not astonished by that prodigy, rushes with fury to the combat.—[The thirtieth day. The scene is on the seashore.]

Soon as Aurora heaved her orient head
Above the waves that blush'd with early red,
(With newborn day to gladden mortal sight,
And gild the courts of heaven with sacred light,)
The immortal arms the goddess mother bears 5
Swift to her son : her son she finds in tears
Stretch'd o'er Patroclus' corse ; while all the rest
Their sovereign's sorrows in their own express'd.
A ray divine her heavenly presence shed,
And thus, his hand soft touching, Thetis said : 10

“ Suppress, my son, this rage of grief, and know
It was not man, but Heaven, that gave the blow ;
Behold what arms by Vulcan are bestow’d,
Arms worthy thee, or fit to grace a god.”

Then drops the radiant burden on the ground ; 15
Clang the strong arms, and ring the shores around :
Back shrink the Myrmidons with dread surprise,
And from the broad effulgence turn their eyes.
Unmoved, the hero kindles at the show,
And feels with rage divine his bosom glow ; 20
From his fierce eyeballs living flames expire,
And flash incessant like a stream of fire :
He turns the radiant gift, and feeds his mind
On all the immortal artist had design’d.

“ Goddess !” he cried, “ these glorious arms that
shine 25
With matchless art, confess the hand divine.
Now to the bloody battle let me bend ;
But ah ! the relics of my slaughter’d friend !
In those wide wounds through which his spirit
fled,

Shall flies, and worms obscene, pollute the dead ?” 30

“ That unavailing care be laid aside,”
The azure goddess to her son replied ;
“ Whole years untouch’d, uninjured, shall remain,
Fresh as in life, the carcass of the slain.
But go, Achilles, as affairs require, 35
Before the Grecian peers renounce thine ire :
Then uncontroll’d in boundless war engage,
And Heaven with strength supply the mighty rage !”

Then in the nostrils of the slain she pour’d
Nectareous drops, and rich ambrosia shower’d 40
O’er all the corse. The flies forbid their prey
Untouch’d it rests, and sacred from decay.
Achilles to the strand obedient went ;
The shores resounded with the voice he sent.
The heroes heard, and all the naval train 45
That tend the ships, or guide them o’er the main

Alarm'd, transported at the well-known sound,
Frequent and full the great assembly crown'd;
Studious to see that terror of the plain,
Long lost to battle, shine in arms again. 50
Tydides and Ulysses first appear,
Lame with their wounds, and leaning on the spear;
These on the sacred seats of council placed,
The king of men, Atrides, came the last:
He too sore wounded by Agenor's son. 55
Achilles, rising in the midst, begun:

“Oh monarch! better far had been the fate
Of thee, of me, of all the Grecian state,
If (ere the day when, by mad passion sway'd,
Rash we contended for the black-eyed maid) 60
Preventing Dian had despatch'd her dart,
And shot the shining mischief to the heart:
Then many a hero had not press'd the shore,
Nor Troy's glad fields been fatten'd with our gore:
Long, long shall Greece the woes we caused bewail,
And sad posterity repeat the tale. 66
But this, no more the subject of debate,
Is past, forgotten, and resign'd to fate:
Why should, alas! a mortal man, as I,
Burn with a fury that can never die? 70
Here then my anger ends: let war succeed,
And ev'n as Greece has bled, let Ilion bleed.
Now call the hosts, and try if in our sight
Troy yet shall dare to camp a second night:
I deem, their mightiest, when this arm he knows, 75
Shall 'scape with transport, and with joy repose.”

He said: his finish'd wrath with loud acclaim
The Greeks accept, and shout Pelides' name.
When thus, not rising from his lofty throne,
In state unmoved, the king of men begun: 80

“Hear me, ye sons of Greece! with silence hear!
And grant your monarch an impartial ear;
A while your loud, untimely joy suspend,
And let your rash, injurious clamours end:

Unruly murmurs, or ill-timed applause, 85
Wrong the best speakers, and the justest cause.
Nor charge on me, ye Greeks, the dire debate :
Know, angry Jove, and all-compelling fate,
With fell Erinnyes, urged my wrath that day
When from Achilles' arms I forced the prey. 90
What then could I against the will of Heaven ?
Not by myself, but vengeful Ate driven ;
She, Jove's dread daughter, fated to infest
The race of mortals, enter'd in my breast.
Not on the ground that haughty fury treads, 95
But prints her lofty footsteps on the heads
Of mighty men ; inflicting as she goes
Long-festering wounds, inextricable woes !
Of old she stalk'd amid the bright abodes ;
And Jove himself, the sire of men and gods, 100
The world's great ruler, felt her venom'd dart,
Deceived by Juno's wiles, and female art ;
For when Alcmena's nine long months were run,
And Jove expected his immortal son,
To gods and goddesses the unruly joy 105
He show'd, and vaunted of his matchless boy :
' From us,' he said, ' this day an infant springs,
Fated to rule, and born a king of kings.'
Saturnia ask'd an oath, to vouch the truth,
And fix dominion on the favour'd youth. 110
The Thunderer, unsuspecting of the fraud,
Pronounced those solemn words that bind a god.
The joyful goddess from Olympus' height
Swift to Achaian Argos bent her flight ;
Scarce seven moons gone, lay Sthenelus's wife ; 115
She push'd her lingering infant into life :
Her charms Alcmena's coming labours stay,
And stop the babe just issuing to the day :
Then bids Saturnius bear his oath in mind :
' A youth,' said she, ' of Jove's immortal kind 120
Is this day born ; from Sthenelus he springs,
And claims thy promise to be king of kings.'

Grief seized the Thunderer, by his oath engaged ;
Stung to the soul, he sorrow'd and he raged.
From his ambrosial head, where perch'd she sat, 125
He snatch'd the fury goddess of debate ;
The dread, the irrevocable oath he swore,
The immortal seats should ne'er behold her more ;
And whirl'd her headlong down, for ever driven
From bright Olympus and the starry heaven : 130
'Thence on the nether world the fury fell ;
Ordain'd with man's contentious race to dwell.
Full oft the god his son's hard toils bemoan'd,
Cursed the dire fury, and in secret groan'd.
Ev'n thus, like Jove himself, was I misled, 135
While raging Hector heap'd our camps with dead.
What can the errors of my rage atone ?
My martial troops, my treasures are thy own :
This instant from the navy shall be sent
Whate'er Ulysses promised at thy tent : 140
But thou appeased, propitious to our prayer,
Resume thy arms, and shine again in war."
" Oh king of nations ! whose superior sway,"
Returns Achilles, " all our hosts obey !
To keep or send the presents be thy care ; 145
To us 'tis equal : all we ask is war.
While yet we talk, or but an instant shun
The fight, our glorious work remains undone.
Let every Greek who sees my spear confound
The Trojan ranks, and deal destruction round, 150
With emulation what I act survey,
And learn from thence the business of the day."
The son of Peleus thus : and thus replies
The great in councils, Ithacus the wise :
" Though, godlike, thou art by no toils oppress'd, 155
At least our armies claim repast and rest :
Long and laborious must the combat be,
When by the gods inspired, and led by thee.
Strength is derived from spirits and from blood,
And those augment by generous wine and food : 160

What boastful son of war, without that stay,
Can last a hero through a single day?
Courage may prompt; but, ebbing out his strength,
Mere unsupported man must yield at length;
Shrunk with dry famine, and with toils declined, 165
The drooping body will desert the mind:
But built anew with strength-conferring fare,
With limbs and soul untamed, he tires a war.
Dismiss the people then, and give command,
With strong repast to hearten every band; 170
But let the presents to Achilles made
In full assembly of all Greeks be laid.
The king of men shall rise in public sight,
And solemn swear, observant of the rite,
'That spotless as she came the maid removes, 175
Pure from his arms, and guiltless of his loves.
That done, a sumptuous banquet shall be made,
And the full price of injured honour paid.
Stretch not henceforth, oh, prince! thy sovereign
might
Beyond the bounds of reason and of right; 180
'Tis the chief praise that e'er to kings belong'd,
To right with justice whom with power they
wrong'd."

To him the monarch: "Just is thy decree;
Thy words give joy, and wisdom breathes in thee.
Each due atonement gladly I prepare: 185
And Heaven regard me as I justly swear!
Here then a while let Greece assembled stay,
Nor great Achilles grudge this short delay;
Till from the fleet our presents be convey'd,
And, Jove attesting, the firm compact made. 190
A train of noble youth the charge shall bear;
These to select, Ulysses, be thy care:
In order rank'd let all our gifts appear,
And the fair train of captives close the rear:
Talthybius shall the victim boar convey, 195
Sacred to Jove and yon bright orb of day."

“For this,” the stern Æacides replies,
“Some less important season may suffice,
When the stern fury of the war is o’er,
And wrath extinguish’d burns my breast no more.
By Hector slain, their faces to the sky, 201
All grim with gaping wounds, our heroes lie:
Those call to war; and might my voice incite,
Now, now, this instant, should commence the fight:
Then, when the day’s complete, let generous bowls,
And copious banquets, glad your weary souls. 206
Let not my palate know the taste of food
Till my insatiate rage be cloy’d with blood:
Pale lies my friend with wounds disfigured o’er,
And his cold feet are pointed to the door. 210
Revenge is all my soul! no meaner care,
Interest, or thought, has room to harbour there;
Destruction be my feast, and mortal wounds,
And scenes of blood, and agonizing sounds.”
“Oh first of Greeks!” Ulysses thus rejoin’d, 215
“The best and bravest of the warrior kind!
Thy praise it is in dreadful camps to shine,
But old experience and calm wisdom mine.
Then hear my counsel, and to reason yield:
The bravest soon are satiate of the field; 220
Though vast the heaps that strew the crimson plain,
The bloody harvest brings but little gain:
The scale of conquest ever wavering lies,
Great Jove but turns it, and the victor dies!
The great, the bold, by thousands daily fall, 225
And endless were the grief to weep for all.
Eternal sorrows what avails to shed?
Greece honours not with solemn fasts the dead:
Enough when death demands the brave to pay
The tribute of a melancholy day. 230
One chief with patience to the grave resign’d,
Our care devolves on others left behind.
Let generous food supplies of strength produce,
Let rising spirits flow from sprightly juice,

Let their warm heads with scenes of battle glow, 235
And pour new furies on the feeble foe.
Yet a small interval, and none shall dare
Expect a second summons to the war;
Who waits for that the dire effect shall find,
If trembling in the ships he lags behind. 240
Imbodied, to the battle let us bend,
And all at once on haughty 'Troy descend."

And now the delegates Ulysses sent,
To bear the presents from the royal tent.
The sons of Nestor, Phyleus' valiant heir, 245
Thias and Merion, thunderbolts of war,
With Lycomedes of Creotian strain,
And Melanippus, form'd the chosen train.
Swift as the word was given the youths obey'd;
'Twice ten bright vases in the midst they laid; 250
A row of six fair tripods then succeeds;
And twice the number of high-bounding steeds;
Seven captives next a lovely line compose;
The eight Briseis, like the blooming rose,
Closed the bright band; great Ithacus before, 255
First of the train, the golden talents bore:
The rest in public view the chiefs dispose,
A splendid scene! Then Agamemnon rose:
The boar Talthybius held: the Grecian lord
Drew the broad cutlass sheathed beside his sword:
The stubborn bristles from the victim's brow 261
He crops, and offering meditates his vow.
His hands uplifted to the attested skies,
On heaven's broad marble roof were fix'd his eyes;
The solemn words a deep attention draw, 265
And Greece around sat thrill'd with sacred awe.

"Witness, thou first! thou greatest power above!
All-good, all-wise, and all-surveying Jove!
And mother earth, and heaven's revolving light,
And ye fell furies of the realms of night, 270
Who rule the dead, and horrid woes prepare
For perjured kings, and all who falsely swear!

The black-eyed maid inviolate removes,
Pure and unconscious of my manly loves.
If this be false, Heaven all its vengeance shed, 275
And levell'd thunder strike my guilty head!"

With that his weapon deep inflicts the wound;
The bleeding savage tumbles to the ground;
The sacred herald rolls the victim slain
(A feast for fish) into the foaming main. 280

Then thus Achilles: "Hear, ye Greeks! and
know,

Whate'er we feel, 'tis Jove inflicts the wo:
Not else Atrides could our rage inflame,
Nor from my arms unwilling force the dame.
'Twas Jove's high will alone, o'erruling all, 285
That doom'd our strife, and doom'd the Greeks to
fall.

Go then, ye chiefs! indulge the genial rite;
Achilles waits you, and expects the fight."

The speedy council at his word adjourn'd:
To their black vessels all the Greeks return'd; 290
Achilles sought his tent. His train before
March'd onward, bending with the gifts they bore.
Those in the tents the squires industrious spread:
The foaming coursers to the stalls they led:
To their new seats the female captives move: 295
Briseis, radiant as the queen of love,
Slow as she pass'd, beheld with sad survey
Where, gash'd with cruel wounds, Patroclus lay.
Prone on the body fell the heavenly fair,
Beat her sad breast, and tore her golden hair; 300
All-beautiful in grief, her humid eyes
Shining with tears she lifts, and thus she cries:

"Ah, youth for ever dear, for ever kind,
Once tender friend of my distracted mind!
I left thee fresh in life, in beauty gay; 305
Now find thee cold, inanimated clay!
What woes my wretched race of life attend!
Sorrows on sorrows never doom'd to end!

The first loved consort of my virgin bed
 Before these eyes in fatal battle bled ! 310
 My three brave brothers in one mournful day
 All trod the dark irremeable way :
 Thy friendly hand uprear'd me from the plain,
 And dried my sorrows for a husband slain ;
 Achilles' care you promised I should prove, 315
 'The first, the dearest partner of his love ;
 'That rites divine should ratify the band,
 And make me empress in his native land.
 Accept these grateful tears ; for thee they flow,
 For thee that ever felt another's wo !" 320

Her sister captives echo'd groan for groan,
 Nor mourn'd Patroclus' fortunes, but their own.
 The leaders press'd the chief on every side ;
 Unmoved he heard them, and with sighs denied.

" If yet Achilles have a friend, whose care 325
 Is bent to please him, this request forbear :
 Till yonder sun descend, ah ! let me pay
 To grief and anguish one abstemious day."

He spoke, and from the warriors turn'd his face :
 Yet still the brother kings of Atreus' race, 330
 Nestor, Idomeneus, Ulysses sage,
 And Phœnix, strive to calm his grief and rage :
 His rage they calm not, nor his grief control ;
 He groans, he raves, he sorrows from his soul.

" Thou too, Patroclus !" (thus his heart he vents,) 335
 " Once spread the inviting banquet in our tents : 336
 Thy sweet society, thy winning care,
 Once staid Achilles rushing to the war.
 But now, alas ! to death's cold arms resign'd,
 What banquet but revenge can glad my mind ? 340
 What greater sorrow could afflict my breast,
 What more if hoary Peleus were deceased ;
 Who now, perhaps, in Phthia dreads to hear
 His son's sad fate, and drops a tender tear ?
 What more should Neoptolemus the brave 345
 (My only offspring) sink into the grave,

If yet that offspring lives : (I distant far,
 Of all neglectful, wage a hateful war.)
 I could not this, this cruel stroke attend ;
 Fate claim'd Achilles, but might spare his friend. 350
 I hoped Patroclus might survive, to rear
 My tender orphan with a parent's care,
 From Scyro's isle conduct him o'er the main,
 And glad his eyes with his paternal reign,
 The lofty palace, and the large domain. 355
 For Peleus breathes no more the vital air ;
 Or drags a wretched life of age and care,
 But till the news of my sad fate invades
 His hastening soul, and sinks him to the shades."

Sighing he said: his grief the heroes join'd, 360
 Each stole a tear for what he left behind.
 Their mingled grief the sire of heaven survey'd,
 And thus with pity to his blue-eyed maid :

"Is then Achilles now no more thy care,
 And dost thou thus desert the great in war? 365
 Lo, where yon sails their canvass wings extend,
 All-comfortless he sits, and wails his friend :
 Ere thirst and want his forces have oppress'd,
 Haste and infuse ambrosia in his breast."

He spoke: and sudden, at the word of Jove, 370
 Shot the descending goddess from above.
 So swift through ether the shrill harpy springs,
 The wide air floating to her ample wings.
 To great Achilles she her flight address'd,
 And pour'd divine ambrosia in his breast, 375
 With nectar sweet, (refection of the gods!)
 Then, swift ascending, sought the bright abodes.

Now issued from the ships the warrior train,
 And like a deluge pour'd upon the plain.
 As when the piercing blasts of Boreas blow, 380
 And scatter o'er the fields the driving snow ;
 From dusky clouds the fleecy winter flies,
 Whose dazzling lustre whitens all the skies :
 So helms succeeding helms, so shields from shields
 Catch the quick beams, and brighten all the fields ;

Broad glittering breastplates, spears with pointed
rays, 386

Mix in one stream, reflecting blaze on blaze :
Thick beats the centre as the coursers bound,
With splendour flame the skies, and laugh the fields
around.

Full in the midst, high towering o'er the rest, 390
His limbs in arms divine Achilles dress'd ;
Arms which the father of the fire bestow'd,
Forged on the eternal anvils of the god.
Grief and revenge his furious heart inspire,
His glowing eyeballs roll with living fire ; 395
He grinds his teeth, and furious with delay
O'erlooks the embattled host, and hopes the bloody
day.

The silver cuishes first his thighs infold ;
Then o'er his breast was braced the hollow gold :
The brazen sword a various baldric tied, 400
That starr'd with gems hung glittering at his side ;
And, like the moon, the broad refulgent shield
Blazed with long rays, and gleam'd athwart the field.

So to night-wandering sailors, pale with fears,
Wide o'er the watery waste a light appears, 405
Which on the far-seen mountain blazing high,
Streams from some lonely watch tower to the sky :
With mournful eyes they gaze, and gaze again ;
Loud howls the storm, and drives them o'er the
main.

Next his high head the helmet graced ; behind 410
The sweepy crest hung floating in the wind :
Like the red star that from his flaming hair
Shakes down diseases, pestilence, and war ;
So stream'd the golden honours from his head,
Trembled the sparkling plumes, and the loose glories
shed. 415

The chief beholds himself with wondering eyes ;
His arms he poises, and his motions tries ;
Buoy'd by some inward force, he seems to swim,
And feels a pinion lifting every limb.

And now he shakes his great paternal spear, 420
 Pond'rous and huge ! which not a Greek could rear.
 From Pelion's cloudy top an ash entire
 Old Chiron fell'd, and shaped it for his sire ;
 A spear which stern Achilles only wields,
 The death of heroes, and the dread of fields ! 425
 Automedon and Alcimus prepare
 The immortal coursers and the radiant car ;
 (The silver traces sweeping at their side ;)
 Their fiery mouths resplendant bridles tied ;
 The ivory-studded reins return'd behind, 430
 Waved o'er their backs, and to the chariot join'd.
 The charioteer then whirl'd the lash around,
 And swift ascended at one active bound.
 All-bright in heavenly arms above his squire,
 Achilles mounts, and sets the field on fire ; 435
 Not brighter Phœbus in the ethereal way
 Flames from his chariot and restores the day.
 High o'er the host all-terrible he stands,
 And thunders to his steeds these dread commands :
 " Xanthus and Balius ! of Podarges' strain, 440
 (Unless ye boast that heavenly race in vain,)
 Be swift, be mindful of the load ye bear,
 And learn to make your master more your care :
 Through falling squadrons bear my slaughtering
 sword,
 Nor, as ye left Patroclus, leave your lord." 445
 The generous Xanthus, as the words he said,
 Seem'd sensible of wo, and droop'd his head :
 Trembling he stood before the golden wain,
 And bow'd to dust the honours of his mane ;
 When, strange to tell ! (so Juno will'd,) he broke 450
 Eternal silence, and portentous spoke :
 " Achilles ! yes ! this day at least we bear
 Thy rage in safety through the files of war :
 But come it will, the fatal time must come,
 Nor ours the fault, but God decrees thy doom. 455
 Not through our crime, or slowness in the course,
 Fell thy Patroclus, but by heavenly force ;

The bright far-shooting god who gilds the day
(Confess'd we saw him) tore his arms away.
No—could our swiftness o'er the winds prevail, 460
Or beat the pinions of the western gale,
All were in vain—the fates thy death demand,
Due to a mortal and immortal hand."

Then ceased for ever, by the furies tied,
His fateful voice. The intrepid chief replied 465
With unabated rage: "So let it be!
Portents and prodigies are lost on me.
I know my fates: to die, to see no more
My much-loved parents and my native shore.
Enough—when Heaven ordains, I sink in night; 470
Now perish Troy!" He said, and rush'd to fight.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT.

The Battle of the Gods. and the Acts of Achilles.

JUPITER, on Achilles' return to the battle, calls a council of the gods, and permits them to assist either party—The terror of the battle described, when the deities are engaged—Apollo encourages Æneas to meet Achilles—After a long conversation, these two heroes encounter; but Æneas is preserved by the assistance of Neptune—Achilles falls on the rest of the Trojans, and is on the point of killing Hector, but Apollo conveys him away in a cloud—Achilles pursues the Trojans with a great slaughter.—[The same day continues. The scene is in the field before Troy.]

THUS round Pelides breathing war and blood,
Greece sheathed in arms beside her vessels stood ;
While near impending from a neighbouring height,
Troy's black battalions wait the shock of fight.
Then Jove to Themis gives command to call 5
The gods to council in the starry hall :
Swift o'er Olympus' hundred hills she flies,
And summons all the senate of the skies.
These shining on, in long procession come
To Jove's eternal adamantine dome. 10
Not one was absent, not a rural power,
That haunts the verdant gloom or rosy bower :
Each fair-hair'd dryad of the shady wood,
Each azure sister of the silver flood ;
All but old ocean, hoary sire, who keeps 15
His ancient seat beneath the sacred deeps.
On marble thrones with lucid columns crown'd,
The work of Vulcan, sat the powers around.

Ev'n he whose trident sways the watery reign
Heard the loud summons, and forsook the main, 20
Assumed his throne amid the bright abodes,
And question'd thus the sire of men and gods :

“What moves the god who heaven and earth commands,
And grasps the thunder in his awful hands,
Thus to convene the whole ethereal state ? 25
Is Greece and Troy the subject in debate ?
Already met, the lowering hosts appear,
And death stands ardent on the edge of war.”

“’Tis true,” the cloud-compelling power replies,
“This day we call the council of the skies 30
In care of human race ; ev’n Jove’s own eye
Sees with regret unhappy mortals die.
Far on Olympus’ top in secret state
Ourself will sit, and see the hand of fate
Work out our will. Celestial powers ! descend, 35
And as your minds direct, your succour lend
To either host. Troy soon must lie o’erthrown,
If uncontroll’d Achilles fights alone :
Their troops but lately durst not meet his eyes ;
What can they now if in his rage he rise ? 40
Assist them, gods ! or Ilion’s sacred wall
May fall this day, though fate forbids the fall.”

He said, and fired their heavenly breasts with rage :
On adverse parts the warring gods engage.
Heaven’s awful queen, and he whose azure round 45
Girds the vast globe ; the maid in arms renown’d ;
Hermes, of profitable arts the sire,
And Vulcan, the black sovereign of the fire :
These to the fleet repair with instant flight ;
The vessels tremble as the gods alight. 50
In aid of Troy, Latona, Phœbus came,
Mars fiery helm’d, the laughter-loving dame,
Xanthus whose streams in golden currents flow,
And the chaste huntress of the silver bow.

Ere yet the gods their various aid employ, 55
 Each Argive bosom swell'd with manly joy,
 While great Achilles, terror of the plain,
 Long lost to battle, shone in arms again.
 Dreadful he stood in front of all his host ;
 Pale Troy beheld, and seem'd already lost ; 60
 Her bravest heroes pant with inward fear,
 And trembling see another god of war.

But when the powers descending swell'd the fight,
 Then tumult rose ; fierce rage and pale affright
 Varied each face ; then discord sounds alarms, 65
 Earth echoes, and the nations rush to arms.
 Now through the trembling shores Minerva calls
 And now she thunders from the Grecian walls.
 Mars hovering o'er his Troy, his terror shrouds
 In gloomy tempests and a night of clouds : 70
 Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours
 With voice divine from Ilion's topmost towers :
 Now shouts to Simois from her beauteous hill ;
 'The mountain shook, the rapid stream stood still.
 Above the sire of gods his thunder rolls, 75
 And peals on peals redoubled rend the poles.
 Beneath stern Neptune shakes the solid ground ;
 The forests wave, the mountains nod around ;
 'Through all their summits tremble Ida's woods,
 And from their sources boil her hundred floods. 80
 Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain ;
 And the toss'd navies beat the heaving main.
 Deep in the dismal regions of the dead,
 'The infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
 Leap'd from his throne, lest Neptune's arms should
 lay 85

His dark dominions open to the day,
 And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
 Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful ev'n to gods.

Such war the immortals' wage ; such horrors rend
 The world's vast concave, when the gods contend. 90
 First silver-shafted Phœbus took the plain
 Against blue Neptune, monarch of the main :

The god of arms his giant bulk display'd,
Opposed to Pallas, war's triumphant maid.
Against Latona march'd the son of May ; 95
The quiver'd Dian, sister of the Day,
(Her golden arrows sounding at her side,)
Saturnia, majesty of heaven, defied.
With fiery Vulcan last in battle stands
The sacred flood that rolls on golden sands ; 100
Xanthus his name with those of heavenly birth,
But call'd Scamander by the sons of earth.

While thus the gods in various league engage,
Achilles glow'd with more than mortal rage :
Hector he sought ; in search of Hector turn'd 105
His eyes around, for Hector only burn'd,
And burst like lightning through the ranks, and
vow'd

To glut the god of battles with his blood.

Æneas was the first who dared to stay ;
Apollo wedged him in the warrior's way, 110
But swell'd his bosom with undaunted might,
Half-forced and half-persuaded to the fight.
Like young Lycaon of the royal line,
In voice and aspect, seem'd the power divine ;
And bade the chief reflect how late with scorn 115
In distant threats he braved the goddess-born.

Then thus the hero of Anchises' strain :
" To meet Pelides you persuade in vain ;
Already have I met, nor void of fear
Observed the fury of his flying spear ; 120
From Ida's woods he chased us to the field,
Our force he scatter'd, and our herds he kill'd ;
Lyrnessus, Pedasus, in ashes lay ;
But, Jove assisting, I survived the day.
Else had I sunk oppress'd in fatal fight, 125
By fierce Achilles and Minerva's might.
Where'er he moved the goddess shone before,
And bathed his brazen lance in hostile gore.
What mortal man Achilles can sustain ?
The immortals guard him through the dreadful plain,

And suffer not his dart to fall in vain. 131
Were God my aid, this arm should check his power,
Though strong in battle as a brazen tower."

To whom the son of Jove : "That god implore,
And be what great Achilles was before. 135
From heavenly Venus thou derivest thy strain,
And he but from a sister of the main ;
An aged sea god, father of his line,
But Jove himself the sacred source of thine.
Then lift thy weapon for a noble blow, 140
Nor fear the vaunting of a mortal foe."

This said, and spirit breathed into his breast,
Through the thick troops the imbolden'd hero
press'd :

His venturous act the white-arm'd queen survey'd,
And thus assembling all the powers, she said : 145

"Behold an action, gods ! that claims your care ;
Lo, great Æneas rushing to the war ;
Against Pelides he directs his course,
Phœbus impels, and Phœbus gives him force.
Restrain his bold career ; at least, t' attend 150
Our favour'd hero let some power descend.
To guard his life, and add to his renown,
We the great armament of heaven came down.
Hereafter let him fall as fates design,
That spun so short his life's illustrious line : 155
But let some adverse god now cross his way,
Give him to know what powers assist this day :
For how shall mortals stand the dire alarms,
When Heaven's refulgent host appear in arms ?"

Thus she ; and thus the god whose force can make
The solid globe's eternal basis shake : 161

"Against the might of man so feeble known,
Why should celestial powers exert their own ?
Suffice from yonder mount to view the scene,
And leave to war the fates of mortal men. 165
But if the armipotent, or god of light,
Obstruct Achilles, or commence the fight,

Thence on the gods of Troy we swift descend:
Full soon, I doubt not, shall the conflict end ;
And these, in ruin and confusion hurl'd, 170
Yield to our conquering arms the lower world."

Thus having said, the tyrant of the sea,
Cerulean Neptune, rose, and led the way.
Advanced upon the field there stood a mound
Of earth congested, wall'd, and trench'd around ; 175
In elder times to guard Alcides made,
(The work of Trojans with Minerva's aid,)
What time a vengeful monster of the main
Swept the wide shore, and drove him to the plain.

Here Neptune and the gods of Greece repair, 180
With clouds encompass'd, and a veil of air :
The adverse powers, around Apollo laid,
Crown the fair hills that silver Simois shade.
In circle close each heavenly party sat,
Intent to form the future scheme of fate ; 185
But mix not yet in fight, though Jove on high
Gives the loud signal, and the heavens reply.

Meanwhile, the rushing armies hide the ground ;
The trampled centre yields a hollow sound ;
Steeds cased in mail, and chiefs in armour bright,
The gleamy champaign glows with brazen light, 191
Amid both hosts (a dreadful space !) appear,
There great Achilles, bold Æneas here.
With towering strides Æneas first advanced ;
The nodding plumage on his helmet danced, 195
Spread o'er his breast the fencing shield he bore,
And as he moved his javelin flamed before.
Not so Pelides : furious to engage,
He rush'd impetuous. Such the lion's rage,
Who viewing first his foes with scornful eyes, 200
Though all in arms the peopled city rise,
Stalks careless on with unregarding pride ;
Till at the length by some brave youth defied,
To his bold spear the savage turns alone,
He murmurs fury with a hollow groan ; 205

He grins, he foams, he rolls his eyes around;
 Lash'd by his tail his heaving sides resound;
 He calls up all his rage; he grinds his teeth,
 Resolved on vengeance or resolved on death.
 So fierce Achilles on Æneas flies; 210
 So stands Æneas, and his force defies.
 Ere yet the stern encounter join'd, begun
 The seed of Thetis thus to Venus' son:

“Why comes Æneas through the ranks so far?
 Seeks he to meet Achilles' arm in war, 215
 In hope the realms of Priam to enjoy,
 And prove his merits to the throne of Troy?
 Grant that beneath thy lance Achilles dies,
 The partial monarch may refuse the prize:
 Sons he has many: those thy pride may quell; 220
 And 'tis his fault to love those sons too well.
 Or in reward of thy victorious hand,
 Has Troy proposed some spacious tract of land?
 An ample forest, or a fair domain,
 Of hill for vines, and arable for grain? 225
 Ev'n this, perhaps, will hardly prove thy lot.
 But can Achilles be so soon forgot?
 Once, as I think, you saw this brandish'd spear,
 And then the great Æneas seem'd to fear;
 With hearty haste from Ida's mount he fled, 230
 Nor till he reach'd Lyrnessus turn'd his head.
 Her lofty walls not long our progress staid;
 'Those Pallas, Jove, and we, in ruins laid;
 In Grecian chains her captive race were cast;
 'Tis true the great Æneas fled too fast. 235
 Defrauded of my conquest once before,
 What then I lost the gods this day restore.
 Go: while thou mayst avoid the threatening fate;
 Fools stay to feel it, and are wise too late.”

To this Anchises' son: “Such words employ 240
 To one that fears thee, some unwarlike boy;
 Such we disdain; the best may be defied
 With mean reproaches, and unmanly pride;

Unworthy the high race from which we came,
Proclaim'd so loudly by the voice of fame : 245
Each from illustrious fathers draws his line ;
Each goddess-born ; half human, half divine.
'Thetis' this day, or Venus' offspring dies,
And tears shall trickle from celestial eyes :
For when two heroes thus derived contend, 250
'Tis not in words the glorious strife can end.
If yet thou further seek to learn my birth,
(A tale resounded through the spacious earth,)
Hear how the glorious origin we prove
From ancient Dardanus, the first from Jove : 255
Dardania's walls he raised ; for Ilion then,
'The city since of many-linguaged men,
Was not. The natives were content to till
The shady foot of Ida's fountful hill.
From Dardanus great Erichthonius springs, 260
The richest once of Asia's wealthy kings ;
Three thousand mares his spacious pastures bred,
Three thousand foals beside their mothers fed.
Boreas, enamour'd of the sprightly train,
Conceal'd his godhead in a flowing mane, 265
With voice dissembled to his loves he neigh'd,
And coursed the dappled beauties o'er the mead :
Hence sprung twelve others of unrivall'd kind,
Swift as their mother mares and father wind.
These lightly skimming when they swept the plain,
Nor plied the grass, nor bent the tender grain ; 271
And when along the level seas they flew,
Scarce on the surface curl'd the briny dew.
Such Erichthonius was : from him there came
The sacred Tros, of whom the Trojan name. 275
Three sons renown'd adorn'd his nuptial bed,
Ilus, Assaracus, and Ganymed :
The matchless Ganymed, divinely fair,
Whom Heaven, enamour'd, snatch'd to upper air
To bear the cup of Jove—(ethereal guest, 280
The grace and glory of the ambrosial feast.)

The two remaining sons the line divide :
 First rose Laomedon from Ilus' side :
 From him Tithonus, now in cares grown old,
 And Priam, bless'd with Hector brave and bold ; 285
 Clytius and Lampus, ever-honour'd pair ;
 And Hicetaon, thunderbolt of war.
 From great Assaracus sprung Capys, he
 Begat Anchises, and Anchises me.
 Such is our race : 'tis fortune gives us birth, 290
 But Jove alone endues the soul with worth :
 He, source of power and might ! with boundless
 sway,

All human courage gives or takes away.
 Long in the field of words we may contend ;
 Reproach is infinite, and knows no end, 295
 Arm'd or with truth or falsehood, right or wrong ;
 So voluble a weapon is the tongue :
 Wounded we wound, and neither side can fail,
 For every man has equal strength to rail :
 Women alone, when in the streets they jar, 300
 Perhaps excel us in this wordy war ;
 Like us they stand encompass'd with the crowd,
 And vent their anger impotent and loud.
 Cease then : our business in the field of fight
 Is not to question, but to prove our might. 305
 To all those insults thou hast offer'd here,
 Receive this answer : 'tis my flying spear."

He spoke. With all his force the javelin flung,
 Fix'd deep, and loudly in the buckler rung.
 Far on his outstretch'd arm Pelides held 310
 (To meet the thundering lance) his dreadful shield,
 That trembled as it struck : nor void of fear
 Saw, ere it fell, the immeasurable spear.
 His fears were vain : impenetrable charms
 Secured the temper of the ethereal arms. 315
 Through two strong plates the point its passage
 held,
 But stopp'd, and rested, by the third repell'd.

Five plates of various metal, various mould,
 Composed the shield; of brass each outward fold,
 Of tin each inward, and the middle gold : 320
 There struck the lance: then rising ere he threw,
 The forceful spear of great Achilles flew,
 And pierced the Dardan shield's extremest bound,
 Where the shrill brass return'd a sharper sound:
 Through the thin verge the Pelian weapon glides,
 And the slight covering of expanded hides. 326
 Æneas his contracted body bends,
 And o'er him high the riven targe extends,
 Sees through its parting plates the upper air
 And at his back perceives the quivering spear: 330
 A fate so near him chills his soul with fright,
 And swims before his eyes the many-colour'd light.
 Achilles rushing in with dreadful cries,
 Draws his broad blade, and at Æneas flies:
 Æneas, rousing as the foe came on, 335
 (With force collected,) heaves a mighty stone;
 A mass enormous! which in modern days
 Not two of earth's degenerate sons could raise:
 But ocean's god, whose earthquakes rock the ground,
 Saw the distress, and moved the powers around. 340
 "Lo! on the brink of fate Æneas stands,
 An instant victim to Achilles' hands:
 By Phœbus urged; but Phœbus has bestow'd
 His aid in vain: the man o'erpowers the god.
 And can ye see the righteous chief atone 345
 With guiltless blood for vices not his own?
 To all the gods his constant vows were paid;
 Sure though he wars for Troy he claims our aid.
 Fate wills not this; nor thus can Jove resign
 The future father of the Dardan line: 350
 The first great ancestor obtain'd his grace,
 And still his love descends on all the race.
 For Priam now, and Priam's faithless kind,
 At length are odious to the all-seeing mind;
 On great Æneas shall devolve the reign, 355
 And sons succeeding sons the lasting line sustain."

The great earthshaker thus : to whom replies
 The imperial goddess with the radiant eyes :
 “ Good as he is, to immolate or spare
 The Dardan prince, oh Neptune ! be thy care ; 360
 Pallas and I by all that gods can bind,
 Have sworn destruction to the Trojan kind :
 Not ev’n an instant to protract their fate,
 Or save one member of the sinking state ;
 Till her last flame be quench’d with her last gore,
 And ev’n her crumbling ruins are no more.” 366

The king of ocean to the fight descends,
 Through all the whistling darts his course he bends,
 Swift interposed between the warriors flies,
 And casts thick darkness o’er Achilles’ eyes. 370
 From great Æneas’ shield the spear he drew,
 And at his master’s feet the weapon threw.
 That done, with force divine he snatch’d on high
 The Dardan prince, and bore him through the sky,
 Smooth gliding without step above the heads 375
 Of warring heroes and of bounding steeds ;
 Till at the battle’s utmost verge they light,
 Where the slow Caucans close the rear of fight.
 The godhead there (his heavenly form confess’d)
 With words like these the panting chief address’d :

“ What power, oh prince, with force inferior far,
 Urged thee to meet Achilles’ arm in war ?
 Henceforth beware, nor antedate thy doom,
 Defrauding fate of all thy fame to come.
 But when the day decreed, for come it must, 385
 Shall lay this dreadful hero in the dust,
 Let then the furies of that arm be known,
 Secure no Grecian force transcends thy own.”

With that he left him wondering as he lay,
 Then from Achilles chased the mist away : 390
 Sudden returning with the stream of light,
 The scene of war came rushing on his sight.
 Then thus amazed : “ What wonders strike my
 mind !

My spear, that parted on the wings of wind,

Laid here before me ! and the Dardan lord, 395
That fell this instant, vanish'd from my sword !
I thought alone with mortals to contend,
But powers celestial sure this foe defend.
Great as he is, our arms he scarce will try,
Content for once, with all his gods to fly, 400
Now then let others bleed." This said, aloud
He vents his fury, and inflames the crowd.
" Oh Greeks !" he cries, and every rank alarms,
" Join battle, man to man, and arms to arms !
'Tis not in me, though favour'd by the sky, 405
To mow whole troops, and make whole armies fly :
No god can singly such a host engage,
Not Mars himself, nor great Minerva's rage.
But whatsoe'er Achilles can inspire,
Whate'er of active force or active fire : 410
Whate'er this heart can prompt, or hand obey ;
All, all Achilles, Greeks ! is yours to-day :
Through yon wide host this arm shall scatter fear,
And thin the squadrons with my single spear."
He said : nor less elate with martial joy, 415
The godlike Hector warm'd the troops of 'Troy.
" Trojans ! to war ! think Hector leads you on ;
Nor dread the vaunts of Peleus' haughty son.
Deeds must decide our fate. Ev'n those with words
Insult the brave who tremble at their swords ; 420
The weakest atheist wretch all heaven defies,
But shrinks and shudders when the thunder flies.
Nor from yon boaster shall your chief retire,
Not though his heart were steel, his hand were fire ;
That fire, that steel, your Hector should with-
stand, 425
And brave that vengeful heart, that dreadful hand.'
Thus (breathing rage through all) the hero said ;
A wood of lances rises round his head,
Clamours on clamours tempest all the air,
They join, they throng, they thicken to the war. 430
But Phœbus warns him from high heaven to shun
The single fight with Thetis' godlike son ;

More safe to combat in the mingled band,
Nor tempt too near the terrors of his hand.
He hears obedient to the god of light, 435
And plunged within the ranks, awaits the fight.

Then fierce Achilles shouting to the skies,
On Troy's whole force with boundless fury flies.
First falls Iphytion at his army's head;
Brave was the chief, and brave the host he led : 440
From great Otrynteus he derived his blood;
His mother was a Nais of the flood :
Beneath the shades of Tmolus, crown'd with snow,
From Hyde's walls he ruled the lands below.
Fierce as he springs, the sword his head divides ; 445
The parted visage falls on equal sides :
With loud-resounding arms he strikes the plain;
While thus Achilles glories o'er the slain :

“Lie there, Otryntides ! the Trojan earth 449
Receives thee dead, though Gygæ boast thy birth ;
Those beauteous fields where Hyllus' waves are
roll'd,

And plenteous Hermus swells with tides of gold,
Are thine no more.” The insulting hero said,
And left him sleeping in eternal shade.
The rolling wheels of Greece the body tore, 455
And dash'd their axles with no vulgar gore.

Demoleon next, Antenor's offspring, laid
Breathless in dust, the price of rashness paid.
The impatient steel with full-descending sway
Forced through his brazen helm its furious way ; 460
Resistless drove the batter'd scull before,
And dash'd and mingled all the brains with gore.
This sees Hippodamas, and, seized with fright,
Deserts his chariot for a swifter flight :
The lance arrests him : an ignoble wound 465
The panting Trojan rivets to the ground.
He groans away his soul ; not louder roars
At Neptune's shrine on Helice's high shores
The victim bull : the rocks rebellow round,
And ocean listens to the grateful sound. 470

Then fell on Polydore his vengeful rage,
 The youngest hope of Priam's stooping age;
 (Whose feet for swiftness in the race surpass'd;)
 Of all his sons the dearest and the last.
 To the forbidden field he takes his flight 475
 In the first folly of a youthful knight;
 To vaunt his swiftness wheels around the plain,
 But vaunts not long, with all his swiftness slain.
 Struck where the crossing belts unite behind,
 And golden rings the double backplate join'd : 480
 Forth through the navel burst the thrilling steel,
 And on his knees with piercing shrieks he fell;
 The rushing entrails pour'd upon the ground
 His hands collect; and darkness wraps him round.
 When Hector view'd all ghastly in his gore, 485
 Thus sadly slain, the unhappy Polydore,
 A cloud of sorrow overcast his sight,
 His soul no longer brook'd the distant fight,
 Full in Achilles' dreadful front he came,
 And shook his javelin like a waving flame. 490
 The son of Peleus sees, with joy possess'd,
 His heart high bounding in his rising breast:
 And lo! the man on whom black fates attend;
 The man that slew Achilles in his friend!
 No more shall Hector's and Pelides' spear 495
 Turn from each other in the walks of war:
 Then with revengeful eyes he scann'd him o'er:
 "Come, and receive thy fate!" He spake no more.
 Hector undaunted thus: "Such words employ
 To one that dreads thee: some unwarlike boy: 500
 Such we could give, defying and defied,
 Mean intercourse of obloquy and pride!
 I know thy force to mine superior far;
 But Heaven alone confers success in war:
 Mean as I am, the gods may guide my dart, . 505
 And give it entrance in a braver heart."

Then parts the lance: but Pallas' heavenly breath
 Far from Achilles wafts the winged death:

The bidden dart again to Hector flies,
 And at the feet of its great master lies. 510
 Achilles closes with his hated foe,
 His heart and eyes with flaming fury glow:
 But, present to his aid, Apollo shrouds
 The favour'd hero in a veil of clouds.

Thrice struck Pelides, with indignant heart, 515
 Thrice in impassive air he plunged the dart:
 The spear a fourth time buried in the cloud;
 He foams with fury, and exclaims aloud:

“Wretch! thou hast ’scaped again; once more
 thy flight

Has saved thee, and the partial god of light. 520
 But long thou shalt not thy just fate withstand,
 If any power assist Achilles’ hand.

Fly then inglorious! but thy flight this day
 Whole hecatombs of ‘Trojan ghosts shall pay.”

With that he gluts his rage on numbers slain: 525
 Then Dryops tumbled to the ensanguined plain,
 Pierced through the neck: he left him panting there,
 And stopp’d Demuchus, great Philetor’s heir,
 Gigantic chief! deep gash’d the enormous blade,
 And for the soul an ample passage made. 530

Laogonus and Dardanus expire,
 The valiant sons of an unhappy sire;
 Both in one instant from the chariot hurl’d,
 Sunk in one instant to the nether world;
 This difference only their sad fates afford, 535
 That one the spear destroy’d, and one the sword.

Nor less unpitied young Alastor bleeds:
 In vain his youth, in vain his beauty pleads;
 In vain he begs thee with a suppliant’s moan,
 To spare a form, an age, so like thy own! 540
 Unhappy boy! no prayer, no moving art,
 E’er bent that fierce inexorable heart!

While yet he trembled at his knees, and cried,
 The ruthless falchion oped his tender side;
 The panting liver pours a flood of gore 545
 That drowns his bosom till he pants no more.

Through Mulius' head then drove the impetuous
spear,
The warrior falls transfix'd from ear to ear.
Thy life, Echeclus, next the sword bereaves,
Deep through the front the ponderous falchion
cleaves ; 550
Warm'd in the brain the smoking weapon lies,
The purple death comes floating o'er his eyes.
Then brave Deucalion died : the dart was flung
Where the knit nerves the pliant elbow strung ;
He dropp'd his arm, an unassisting weight, 555
And stood all impotent, expecting fate :
Full on his neck the falling falchion sped,
From his broad shoulders hewed his crested head :
Forth from the bone the spinal marrow flies,
And sunk in dust the corpse extended lies. 560
Rhigmus, whose race from fruitful Thracia came,
(The son of Pireus, an illustrious name,)
Succeeds to fate ; the spear his belly rends ;
Prone from his car the thundering chief descends :
The squire, who saw expiring on the ground 565
His prostrate master, rein'd the steeds around :
His back scarce turn'd the Pelian javelin gored,
And stretch'd the servant o'er his dying lord.
As when a flame the winding valley fills,
And runs on crackling shrubs between the hills : 570
Then o'er the stubble up the mountain flies,
Fires the high woods and blazes to the skies,
This way and that the spreading torrent roars ;
So sweeps the hero through the wasted shores :
Around him wide immense destruction pours, 575
And earth is deluged with the sanguine showers.
As with autumnal harvests covered o'er,
And thick bestrown lies Ceres' sacred floor ;
When round and round, with never-wearied pain,
The trampling steers beat out the unnumber'd grain :
So the fierce coursers, as the chariot rolls, 581
Tread down whole ranks, and crush out heroes'
souls.

Dash'd from their hoofs, while o'er the dead they fly,
Black bloody drops the smoking chariot die :
The spiky wheels through heaps of carnage tore ; 585
And thick the groaning axles dropp'd with gore.
High o'er the scene of death Achilles stood,
All grim with dust, all horrible in blood :
Yet still insatiate, still with rage on flame ;
Such is the lust of never-dying fame ! 590

BOOK XXI.

ARGUMENT.

The Battle in the River Scamander.

THE Trojans fly before Achilles, some towards the town, others to the river Scamander: he falls on the latter with great slaughter; takes twelve captives alive, to sacrifice to the shade of Patroclus; and kills Lycaon and Asteropæus—Scamander attacks him with all his waves; Neptune and Pallas assist the hero; Simois joins Scamander: at length Vulcan, by the instigation of Juno, almost dries up the river—This combat ended, the other gods engage each other—Meanwhile Achilles continues the slaughter, drives the rest into Troy: Agenor only makes a stand, and is conveyed away in a cloud by Apollo; who, to delude Achilles, takes on him Agenor's shape, and, while he pursues him in that disguise, gives the Trojans an opportunity of retiring into their city.—[The same day continues. The scene is on the banks and in the stream of Scamander.]

AND now to Xanthus' gliding stream they drove;
Xanthus, immortal progeny of Jove.
The river here divides the flying train.
Part to the town fly diverse o'er the plain,
Where late their troops triumphant bore the fight; 5
Now chased and trembling in ignoble flight:
(These with a gather'd mist Saturnia shrouds,
And rolls behind the rout a heap of clouds.)
Part plunge into the stream: old Xanthus roars,
The dashing billows beat the whiten'd shores: 10
With cries promiscuous all the banks resound;
And here and there, in eddies whirling round,
The flouncing steeds and shrieking warriors drown'd.
As the scorch'd locusts from their fields retire,
While fast behind them runs the blaze of fire; 15

Driven from the land before the smoky cloud,
The clustering legions rush into the flood:
So plunged in Xanthus by Achilles' force,
Roars the resounding surge with men and horse.
His bloody lance the hero cast aside ; 20
(Which spreading tamarisks on the margin hide ;)
Then, like a god the rapid billows braves,
Arm'd with his sword high brandish'd o'er the waves:
Now down he plunges, now he whirls it round :
Deep groan'd the waters with the dying sound ; 25
Repeated wounds the reddening river died,
And the warm purple circled on the tide.
Swift through the foamy flood the Trojans fly,
And close in rocks or winding caverns lie :
So the huge dolphin tempesting the main, 30
In shoals before him fly the scaly train,
Confusedly heap'd they seek their inmost caves,
Or pant and heave beneath the floating waves.
Now tired with slaughter, from the Trojan band
Twelve chosen youths he drags alive to land ; 35
With their rich belts their captive arms constrains:
(Late their proud ornaments, but now their chains.)
These his attendants to the ships convey'd,
Sad victims ! destined to Patroclus' shade.
Then, as once more he plunged amid the flood, 40
The young Lycaon in his passage stood ;
The son of Priam, whom the hero's hand
But late made captive in his father's land ;
(As from a sycamore his sounding steel
Lopp'd the green arms to spoke a chariot wheel ;)
To Lemnos' isle he sold the royal slave, 46
Where Jason's son the price demanded gave ;
But kind Eetion touching on the shore,
The ransom'd prince to fair Arisbe bore.
Ten days were pass'd since in his father's reign 50
He felt the sweets of liberty again ;
The next that god whom men in vain withstand,
Gives the same youth to the same conquering hand ;

Now never to return ! and doom'd to go
A sadder journey to the shades below. 55

His well-known face when great Achilles eyed,
(The helm and visor he had cast aside
With wild affright, and dropp'd upon the field
His useless lance and unavailing shield,)
As trembling, panting, from the stream he fled, 60
And knock'd his faltering knees, the hero said :

" Ye mighty gods ! what wonders strike my view !
Is it in vain our conquering arms subdue ?
Sure I shall see yon heaps of Trojans kill'd,
Rise from the shades, and brave me on the field ; 65
As now the captive, whom so late I bound
And sold to Lemnos, stalks on Trojan ground !
Not him the sea's unmeasured deeps detain,
That bar such numbers from their native plain :
Lo ! he returns. Try, then, my flying spear ! 70
Try if the grave can hold the wanderer ;
If earth at length this active prince can seize,
Earth, whose strong grasp has held down Hercules."

Thus while he spake, the Trojan pale with fears
Approach'd, and sought his knees with suppliant
tears ; 75

Loath as he was to yield his youthful breath,
And his soul shivering at the approach of death.
Achilles raised the spear prepared to wound ;
He kiss'd his feet extended on the ground ;
And while above the spear suspended stood, 80
Longing to dip its thirsty point in blood,
One hand embraced them close, one stopp'd the dart,
While thus these melting words attempt his heart :

" Thy well-known captive, great Achilles ! see :
Once more Lycaon trembles at thy knee. 85
Some pity to a suppliant's name afford,
Who shared the gifts of Ceres at thy board :
Whom late thy conquering arm to Lemnos bore,
Far from his father, friends, and native shore ;
A hundred oxen were his price that day, 90
Now sums immense thy mercy shall repay.

Scarce respited from woes I yet appear,
And scarce twelve morning suns have seen me here ;
Lo ! Jove again submits me to thy hands,
Again her victim cruel fate demands ! 95
I sprung from Priam and Laothoe fair :
(Old Alte's daughter, and Lelegia's heir :
Who held in Pedasus his famed abode,
And ruled the fields where silver Satnio flow'd :)
Two sons (alas ! unhappy sons) she bore ; 100
For ah ! one spear shall drink each brother's gore,
And I succeed to slaughter'd Polydore.
How from that arm of terror shall I fly ?
Some demon urges ! 'tis my doom to die !
If ever yet soft pity touch'd thy mind, 105
Ah ! think not me too much of Hector's kind !
Not the same mother gave thy suppliant breath,
With his who wrought thy loved Patroclus' death."
These words, attended with a shower of tears,
The youth address'd to unrelenting ears. 110
"Talk not of life, or ransom," he replies ;
"Patroclus dead, whoever meets me dies ;
In vain a single Trojan sues for grace ;
But least the sons of Priam's hateful race.
Die then, my friend ! what boots it to deplore ? 115
The great, the good Patroclus is no more !
He, far thy better, was foredoom'd to die,
And thou, dost thou bewail mortality ?
Seest thou not me, whom nature's gifts adorn,
Sprung from a hero, from a goddess born ; 120
The day shall come (which nothing can avert)
When by the spear, the arrow, or the dart,
By night or day, by force or by design,
Impending death and certain fate are mine.
Die then." He said ; and as the word he spoke, 125
The fainting stripling sunk before the stroke :
His hand forgot its grasp, and left the spear,
While all his trembling frame confess'd his fear ;
Sudden Achilles his broad sword display'd,
And buried in his neck the reeking blade. 130

Prone fell the youth ; and panting on the land,
The gushing purple died the thirsty sand ;
The victor to the stream the carcass gave,
And thus insults him floating on the wave :

“ Lie there, Lycaon ! let the fish surround 135
Thy bloated corse, and suck thy gory wound :
There no sad mother shall thy funerals weep,
But swift Scamander roll thee to the deep,
Whose every wave some watery monster brings,
To feast unpunish'd on the fat of kings. 140
So perish Troy and all the Trojan line !
Such ruin theirs, and such compassion mine.

What boots ye now Scamander's worshipp'd stream,
His earthly honours and immortal name ?
In vain your immolated bulls are slain, 145
Your living coursers glut his gulfs in vain :
Thus he rewards you with this bitter fate ;
Thus till the Grecian vengeance is complete ;
Thus is atoned Patroclus' honour'd shade,
And the short absence of Achilles paid.” 150

These boastful words provoke the raging god ;
With fury swells the violated flood.
What means divine may yet the power employ,
To check Achilles, and to rescue Troy ?
Meanwhile, the hero springs in arms to dare 155
The great Asteropeus to mortal war ;
The son of Pelagon, whose lofty line
Flows from the source of Axius, stream divine !
Fair Peribœa's love the god had crown'd,
With all his reflux waters circled round. 160
On him Achilles rush'd : he fearless stood,
And shook two spears advancing from the flood ;
The flood impell'd him on Pelides' head
To avenge his waters choked with heaps of dead.
Near as they drew, Achilles thus began : 165

“ What art thou, boldest of the race of man !
Who, or from whence ? Unhappy is the sire
Whose son encounters our resistless ire.”

“ Oh son of Peleus ! what avails to trace,”
 Replied the warrior, “ our illustrious race ? 170
 From rich Pæonia’s valleys I command,
 Arm’d with protended spears, my native band ;
 Now shines the tenth bright morning since I came
 In aid of Ilion to the fields of fame :
 Axios, who swells with all the neighbouring rills, 175
 And wide around the floating region fills,
 Begot my sire, whose spear such glory won :
 Now lift thy arm and try that hero’s son !”

Threatening he said : the hostile chiefs advance ;
 At once Asteropeus discharged each lance : 180
 (For both his dexterous hands the lance could wield :)
 One struck, but pierced not the Vulcanian shield ;
 One razed Achilles’ hand ; the spouting blood
 Spun forth, in earth the fasten’d weapon stood.
 Like lightning next the Pelian javelin flies : 185
 Its erring fury hiss’d along the skies ;
 Deep in the swelling bank was driven the spear,
 Ev’n to the middle earth’d, and quiver’d there.
 Then from his side the sword Pelides drew,
 And on his foe with doubled fury flew. 190
 The foe thrice tugg’d and shook the rooted wood ;
 Repulsive of his might the weapon stood :
 The fourth he tries to break the spear in vain ;
 Bent as he stands, he tumbles to the plain ;
 His belly open’d with a ghastly wound, 195
 The reeking entrails pour upon the ground.
 Beneath the hero’s feet he panting lies,
 And his eye darkens, and his spirit flies :
 While the proud victor thus triumphing said,
 His radiant armour tearing from the dead : 200
 “ So ends thy glory ! such the fate they prove
 Who strive presumptuous with the sons of Jove.
 Sprung from a river didst thou boast thy line ?
 But great Saturnius is the source of mine.
 How durst thou vaunt thy watery progeny ? 205
 Of Pelius, Æacus, and Jove, am I ;

The race of these superior far to those,
 As he that thunders to the stream that flows.
 What rivers can, Scamander might have shown ;
 But Jove he dreads, nor wars against his son. 210
 Ev'n Achelous might contend in vain,
 And all the roaring billows of the main.
 The eternal ocean, from whose fountains flow
 The seas, the rivers, and the springs below,
 The thundering voice of Jove abhors to hear, 215
 And in his deep abysses shakes with fear."

He said ; then from the bank his javelin tore,
 And left the breathless warrior in his gore.
 The floating tides the bloody carcass lave,
 And beat against it, wave succeeding wave ; 220
 Till roll'd between the banks, it lies the food
 Of curling eels, and fishes of the flood.
 All scatter'd round the stream, their mightiest slain,
 The amazed Pæonians scour along the plain :
 He vents his fury on the flying crew, 225
 Thrasius, Astypylus, and Mnesus, slew ;
 Mydon, Thersilochus, with Ænius fell ;
 And numbers more his lance had plunged to hell,
 But from the bottom of his gulfs profound
 Scamander spoke ; the shores return'd the sound :

" Oh first of mortals ! for the gods are thine, 231
 In valour matchless, and in force divine !
 If Jove have given thee every Trojan head,
 'Tis not on me thy rage should heap the dead.
 See ! my choked streams no more their course can
 keep, 235

Nor roll their wonted tribute to the deep.
 Turn then, impetuous ! from our injured flood ;
 Content thy slaughters could amaze a god."

In human form confess'd before his eyes,
 The river thus ; and thus the chief replies : 240
 " Oh sacred stream ! thy word we shall obey ;
 But not till Troy the destined vengeance pay :
 Not till within her towers the perjured train
 Shall pant and tremble at our arms again :

Not till proud Hector, guardian of her wall, 245
Or stain this lance, or see Achilles fall."

He said; and drove with fury on the foe.
Then to the godhead of the silver bow
The yellow flood began: "Oh son of Jove!
Was not the mandate of the sire above 250
Full and express? that Phœbus should employ
His sacred arrows in defence of Troy,
And make her conquer till Hyperion's fall
In awful darkness hide the face of all?"

He spoke in vain—the chief without dismay 255
Ploughs through the boiling surge his desperate
way.

Then rising in his rage above the shores,
From all his deep the bellowing river roars,
Huge heaps of slain disgorges on the coast,
And round the banks the ghastly dead are toss'd; 260
While all before the billows ranged on high
(A watery bulwark) screen the bands who fly.
Now bursting on his head with thundering sound,
The falling deluge whelms the hero round:
His loaded shield bends to the rushing tide; 265
His feet upborne scarce the strong flood divide,
Sliddering and staggering. On the border stood
A spreading elm that overhung the flood;
He seized a bending bough his steps to stay;
The plant uprooted to his weight gave way, 270
Heaving the bank, and undermining all;
Loud flash the waters to the rushing fall
Of the thick foliage. The large trunk display'd,
Bridged the rough flood across: the hero staid
On this his weight, and raised upon his hand, 275
Leap'd from the channel, and regain'd the land.
Then blacken'd the wild waves; the murmur rose;
The god pursues, a huger billow throws,
And bursts the bank, ambitious to destroy
The man whose fury is the fate of Troy. 280
He, like the warlike eagle speeds his pace,
(Swiftest and strongest of the aerial race.)

Far as a spear can fly Achilles springs
At every bound; his clanging armour rings;
Now here, now there, he turns on every side, 285
And winds his course before the following tide;
The waves flow after wheresoe'er he wheels,
And gather fast, and murmur at his heels.

So when a peasant to his garden brings
Soft rills of water from the bubbling springs, 290
And calls the floods from high to bless his bowers,
And feed with pregnant streams the plants and
flowers;

Soon as he clears whate'er their passage staid,
And marks the future current with his spade,
Swift o'er the rolling pebbles down the hills, 295
Louder and louder purl the falling rills;
Before him scattering they prevent his pains,
And shine in mazy wanderings o'er the plains.

Still flies Achilles, but before his eyes
Still swift Scamander rolls where'er he flies: 300
Not all his speed escapes the rapid floods;
The first of men, but not a match for gods.

Oft as he turn'd the torrent to oppose,
And bravely try if all the powers were foes;
So oft the surge in watery mountains spread, 305
Beats on his back, or bursts upon his head.
Yet dauntless still the adverse flood he braves,
And still indignant bounds above the waves.

Tired by the tides, his knees relax with toil;
Wash'd from beneath him slides the slimy soil: 310
When thus (his eyes on heaven's expansion thrown)
Forth bursts the hero with an angry groan:

“Is there no god Achilles to befriend,
No power to avert his miserable end?
Prevent, oh Jove! this ignominious date, 315
And make my future life the sport of fate.
Of all heaven's oracles believed in vain,
But most of Thetis must her son complain;
By Phœbus' darts she prophesied my fall,
In glorious arms before the Trojan wall. 320

Oh! had I died in fields of battle warm,
Stretch'd like a hero by a hero's arm!
Might Hector's spear this dauntless bosom rend,
And my swift soul o'ertake my slaughter'd friend;
Ah, no! Achilles meets a shameful fate, 325
Oh, how unworthy of the brave and great!
Like some vile swain, whom on a rainy day,
Crossing a ford, the torrent sweeps away,
An unregarded carcass to the sea."

Neptune and Pallas haste to his relief, 330
And thus in human form address'd the chief:
The power of ocean first: "Forbear thy fear,
Oh son of Peleus! lo, thy gods appear!
Behold! from Jove descending to thy aid,
Propitious Neptune and the blue-eyed maid. 335
Stay, and the furious flood shall cease to rave:
'Tis not thy fate to glut his angry wave.
But thou the counsel Heaven suggests attend;
Nor breathe from combat, nor thy sword suspend,
Till Troy receive her flying sons, till all 340
Her routed squadrons pant behind their wall:
Hector alone shall stand his fatal chance,
And Hector's blood shall smoke upon thy lance.
Thine is the glory doom'd." Thus spoke the gods:
Then swift ascended to the bright abodes. 345
Stung with new ardour, thus by Heaven impell'd,
He springs impetuous, and invades the field:
O'er all the expanded plain the waters spread;
Heaved on the bounding billows danced the dead,
Floating mid scatter'd arms; while casques of gold
And turn'd-up bucklers glitter'd as they roll'd. 351
High o'er the surging tide, by leaps and bounds,
He wades and mounts; the parted wave resounds.
Not a whole river stops the hero's course,
While Pallas fills him with immortal force. 355
With equal rage indignant Xanthus roars,
And lifts his billows and o'erwhelms his shores.
Then thus to Simois: "Haste, my brother flood!
And check this mortal that controls a god:

Our bravest heroes else shall quit the fight, 360
And Ilion tumble from her towery height.
Call then thy subject streams, and bid them roar,
From all thy fountains swell thy watery store,
With broken rocks, and with a load of dead
Charge the black surge, and pour it on his head. 365
Mark how resistless through the flood he goes,
And boldly bids the warring gods be foes!
But nor that force, nor form divine to sight,
Shall aught avail him if our rage unite:
Whelm'd under our dark gulfs those arms shall lie,
That blaze so dreadful in each Trojan eye; 371
And deep beneath a sandy mountain hurl'd,
Immersed remain this terror of the world.
Such ponderous ruin shall confound the place,
No Greek shall e'er his perish'd relics grace, 375
No hand his bones shall gather or inhume;
These his cold rites, and this his watery tomb."
He said; and on the chief descends amain,
Increased with gore, and swelling with the slain.
Then murmuring from his beds, he boils, he raves,
And a foam whitens on the purple waves: 381
At every step before Achilles stood
The crimson surge, and deluged him with blood.
Fear touch'd the queen of heaven; she saw dismay'd,
She call'd aloud, and summon'd Vulcan's aid. 385
"Rise to the war! the insulting flood requires
Thy wasteful arm; assemble all thy fires!
While to their aid, by our command enjoin'd,
Rush the swift eastern and the western wind:
These from old ocean at my word shall blow, 390
Pour the red torrent on the watery foe,
Corse and arms to one bright ruin turn,
And hissing rivers to their bottoms burn.
Go, mighty in thy rage! display thy power, 394
Drink the whole flood, the crackling trees devour,
Scorch all the banks! and, till our voice reclaim,
Exert the unwearied furies of the flame!"

The power ignipotent her word obeys :
 Wide o'er the plain he pours the boundless blaze ;
 At once consumes the dead and dries the soil : 400
 As the shrunk waters in their channel boil.
 As when autumnal Boreas sweeps the sky,
 And instant blows the water'd gardens dry ;
 So look'd the field, so whiten'd was the ground,
 While Vulcan breathed the fiery blast around. 405
 Swift on the sedgy reeds the ruin preys ;
 Along the margin winds the running blaze :
 The trees in flaming rows to ashes turn,
 The flowery lotus and the tamarisk burn.
 Broad elm and cypress rising in a spire ; 410
 The watery willows hiss before the fire.
 Now glow the waves, the fishes pant for breath,
 The eels lie twisting in the pangs of death :
 Now flounce aloft, now dive the scaly fry,
 Or gasping turn their bellies to the sky. 415
 At length the river rear'd his languid head,
 And thus, short panting, to the god he said :
 " Oh, Vulcan ! oh ! what power resists thy might ?
 I faint, I sink, unequal to the fight—
 I yield—let Ilion fall ; if fate decree— 420
 Ah bend no more thy fiery arms on me !"
 He ceased : wide conflagration blazing round ;
 The bubbling waters yield a hissing sound.
 As when the flames beneath a caldron rise,
 To melt the fat of some rich sacrifice, 425
 Amid the fierce embrace of circling fires
 The waters foam, the heavy smoke aspires :
 So boils the imprison'd flood, forbid to flow,
 And choked with vapours, feels his bottom glow.
 To Juno then, imperial queen of air, 430
 The burning river sends his earnest prayer :
 " Ah, why, Saturnia ! must thy son engage
 Me, only me, with all his wasteful rage ?
 On other gods his dreadful arm employ,
 For mightier gods assert the cause of Troy. 435

Submissive, I desist if thou command;
 But, ah! withdraw this all-destroying hand.
 Hear then my solemn oath to yield to fate
 Unaided Ilion and her destined state,
 Till Greece shall gird her with destructive flame, 440
 And in one ruin sink the Trojan name."

His warm entreaty touch'd Saturnia's ear:
 She bade the ignipotent his rage forbear,
 Recall the flame, nor in a mortal cause
 Infest a god; the obedient flame withdraws; 445
 Again the branching streams begin to spread,
 And soft remurmur in their wonted bed.

While these by Juno's will the strife resign,
 The warring gods in fierce contention join:
 Rekindling rage each heavenly breast alarms; 450
 With horrid clangour shock the ethereal arms:
 Heaven in loud thunder bids the trumpet sound;
 And wide beneath them groans the rending ground.
 Jove as his sport the dreadful scene describes,
 And views contending gods with careless eyes. 455
 The power of battles lifts his brazen spear,
 And first assaults the radiant queen of war.

"What moved thy madness thus to disunite
 Ethereal minds, and mix all heaven in fight?
 What wonder this when in thy frantic mood 460
 Thou drovest a mortal to insult a god?
 Thy impious hand Tydides' javelin bore,
 And madly bathed it in celestial gore."

He spoke, and smote the loud-resounding shield,
 Which bears Jove's thunder on its dreadful field:
 The adamantine ægis of her sire, 466
 That turns the glancing bolt and forked fire.
 Then heaved the goddess in her mighty hand
 A stone, the limit of the neighbouring land,
 There fix'd from eldest times; black, craggy, vast:
 'This at the heavenly homicide she cast. 471
 Thundering he falls, a mass of monstrous size,
 And seven broad acres covers as he lies.

The stunning stroke his stubborn nerves unbound;
Loud o'er the fields his ringing arms resound: 475
The scornful dame her conquest views with smiles,
And glorying, thus the prostrate god reviles:

“Hast thou not yet, insatiate fury! known
How far Minerva's force transcends thy own?
Juno, whom thou rebellious darest withstand, 480
Corrects thy folly thus by Pallas' hand;
Thus meets thy broken faith with just disgrace,
And partial aid to 'Troy's perfidious race.”

The goddess spoke, and turn'd her eyes away,
That beaming round diffused celestial day. 485
Jove's Cyprian daughter stooping on the land,
Lent to the wounded god her tender hand:
Slowly he rises, scarcely breathes with pain,
And propp'd on her fair hand forsakes the plain.
This the bright empress of the heavens survey'd, 490
And scoffing, thus to war's victorious maid:

“Lo! what an aid on Mars's side is seen!
The smiles' and loves' unconquerable queen!
Mark with what insolence, in open view,
She moves: let Pallas, if she dares, pursue.” 495

Minerva smiling heard, the pair o'ertook,
And slightly on her breast the wanton struck:
She unresisting fell, her spirits fled;
On earth together lay the lovers spread.
“And like these heroes be the fate of all,” 500
Minerva cries, “who guard the Trojan wall!
To Grecian gods such let the Phrygians be,
So dread, so fierce, as Venus is to me;
Then from the lowest stone shall Troy be moved.”
Thus she; and Juno with a smile approved. 505

Meantime, to mix in more than mortal fight,
The god of ocean dares the god of light.
“What sloth has seized us when the fields around
Ring with conflicting powers, and heaven returns
the sound?

Shall, ignominious, we with shame retire, 510
No deed perform'd, to our Olympian sire?

Come, prove thy arm ! for first the war to wage
 Suits not my greatness or superior age ;
 Rash as thou art to prop the 'Trojan throne,
 (Forgetful of my wrongs and of thy own,) 515
 And guard the race of proud Laomedon !
 Hast thou forgot how, at the monarch's prayer,
 We shared the lengthen'd labours of a year ?
 Troy walls I raised, for such were Jove's commands,
 And yon proud bulwarks grew beneath my hands :
 Thy task it was to feed the bellowing droves 521
 Along fair Ida's vales and pendent groves.
 But when the circling seasons in their train
 Brought back the grateful day that crown'd our
 pain,
 With menace stern the fraudulent king defied 525
 Our latent godhead, and the prize denied :
 Mad as he was, he threaten'd servile bands,
 And doom'd us exiles far in barbarous lands.
 Incensed we heavenward flew with swiftest wing,
 And destined vengeance on the perjured king : 530
 Dost thou for this afford proud Ilion grace,
 And not like us infest the faithless race ;
 Like us, their present, future sons destroy,
 And from its deep foundations heave their Troy ?'
 Apollo thus : " To combat for mankind, 535
 Ill suits the wisdom of celestial mind :
 For what is man ? Calamitous by birth,
 They owe their life and nourishment to earth ;
 Like yearly leaves, that now, with beauty crown'd,
 Smile on the sun ; now wither on the ground. 540
 To their own hands commit the frantic scene,
 Nor mix immortals in a cause so mean."
 Then turns his face, far beaming heavenly fires,
 And from the senior power submiss retires :
 Him, thus retreating, Artemis upbraids, 545
 The quiver'd huntress of the sylvan shades :
 " And is it thus the youthful Phœbus flies,
 And yields to ocean's hoary sire the prize ?

How vain that martial pomp, and dreadful show
Of pointed arrows and the silver bow ! 550
Now boast no more in yon celestial bower,
Thy force can match the great earth-shaking power."

Silent he heard the queen of woods upbraid :
Not so Saturnia bore the vaunting maid :
But furious thus : " What insolence has driven 555
Thy pride to face the majesty of heaven ?
What though by Jove the female plague design'd,
Fierce to the feeble race of womankind,
The wretched matron feels thy piercing dart ;
Thy sex's tyrant with a tiger's heart ? 560
What though, tremendous in the woodland chase,
Thy certain arrows pierce the savage race ?
How dares thy rashness on the powers divine
Employ those arms, or match thy force with mine ?
Learn hence no more unequal war to wage." 565
She said, and seized her wrists with eager rage :
These in her left hand lock'd, her right untied
The bow, the quiver, and its plummy pride.
About her temples flies the busy bow ;
Now here, now there, she winds her from the blow :
The scattering arrows rattling from the case 571
Drop round and idly mark the dusty place.
Swift from the field the baffled huntress flies,
And scarce restrains the torrent in her eyes :
So when the falcon wings her way above, 575
To the cleft cavern speeds the gentle dove,
Not fated yet to die, there safe retreats,
Yet still her heart against the marble beats.

To her Latona hastes with tender care,
Whom Hermes viewing, thus declines the war : 580
" How shall I face the dame who gives delight
To him whose thunders blacken heaven with night ?
Go, matchless goddess ! triumph in the skies,
And boast my conquest while I yield the prize."

He spoke, and pass'd : Latona, stooping low, 585
Collects the shatter'd shafts and fallen bow,

That glittering on the dust lay here and there ;
Dishonour'd relics of Diana's war.

Then swift pursued her to her bless'd abode, 589
Where all confused, she sought the sovereign god ;
Weeping she grasp'd his knees : the ambrosial vest
Shook with her sighs, and panted on her breast.
The sire superior smiled ; and bade her show
What heavenly hand had caused his daughter's wo.
Abash'd, she names his own imperial spouse ; 595
And the palecrescent fades upon her brows.

Thus they above : while swiftly gliding down,
Apollo enters Ilion's sacred town :
The guardian god now trembled for her wall,
And fear'd the Greeks, though fate forbade her fall.
Back to Olympus from the war's alarms 601
Return'd the shining bands of gods in arms ;
Some proud in triumphs, some with rage on fire,
And take their thrones around the ethereal sire.

Through blood, through death, Achilles still pro-
ceeds, 605
O'er slaughter'd heroes, and o'er rolling steeds.
As when avenging flames with fury driven
On guilty towns, exert the wrath of Heaven ;
The pale inhabitants, some fall, some fly ;
And the red vapours purple all the sky : 610
So raged Achilles : death and dire dismay,
And toils, and terrors, fill'd the dreadful day.

High on a turret hoary Priam stands,
And marks the waste of his destructive hands :
Views from his arm the Trojans' scatter'd flight,
And the near hero rising on his sight ! 616
No stop, no check, no aid ! With feeble pace,
And settled sorrow on his aged face,
Fast as he could he sighing quits the walls ;
And thus, descending, on the guards he calls : 620

“ You to whose care our city gates belong,
Set wide your portals to the flying throng :
For, lo ! he comes with unresisted sway ;
He comes, and desolation marks his way !

But when within the walls our troops take breath,
Lock fast the brazen bars, and shut out death.” 626

Thus charged the reverend monarch: wide were
flung

The opening folds; the sounding hinges rung.
Phœbus rush'd forth the flying bands to meet,
Struck slaughter back, and cover'd the retreat. 630
On heaps the 'Trojans crowd to gain the gate,
And gladsome see their last escape from fate.
Thither all parch'd with thirst, a heartless train,
Hoary with dust they beat the hollow plain;
And gasping, panting, fainting, labour on, 635
With heavier strides, that lengthen towards the
town.

Enraged Achilles follows with his spear,
Wild with revenge, insatiable of war.

Then had the Greeks eternal praise acquired,
And Troy inglorious to her walls retired: 640
But he, the god who darts ethereal flame,
Shot down to save her, and redeem her fame.
To young Agenor force divine he gave,
Antenor's offspring, haughty, bold, and brave:
In aid of him beside the beach he sate, 645
And wrapp'd in clouds restrain'd the hand of fate.
When now the generous youth Achilles spies,
Thick beats his heart, the troubled motions rise;
So ere a storm the waters heave and roll;
He stops, and questions thus his mighty soul: 650

“What! shall I fly this terror of the plain?
Like others fly, and be like others slain?
Vain hope, to shun him by the selfsame road
Yon line of slaughter'd 'Trojans lately trod!
No: with the common heap I scorn to fall— 655
What if they pass'd me to the Trojan wall,
While I decline to yonder path that leads
To Ida's forests and surrounding shades?

641 Apollo.

So may I reach conceal'd the cooling flood,
From my tired body wash the dirt and blood, 660
And soon as Night her dusky veil extends,
Return in safety to my Trojan friends.

What if— But wherefore all this vain debate ?
Stand I to doubt within the reach of fate ?
Ev'n now, perhaps, ere yet I turn the wall, 665
The fierce Achilles sees me, and I fall :

Such is his swiftness, 'tis in vain to fly,
And such his valour, that who stands must die.
Howe'er, 'tis better, fighting for the state,
Here and in public view to meet my fate. 670

Yet sure he too is mortal ! he may feel,
Like all the sons of earth, the force of steel ;
One only soul informs that dreadful frame,
And Jove's sole favour gives him all his fame."

He said, and stood collected in his might ; 675
And all his beating bosom claim'd the fight.

So from some deep-grown wood a panther starts,
Roused from his thicket by a storm of darts ;
Untaught to fear or fly, he hears the sounds
Of shouting hunters and of clamorous hounds ; 680
Though struck, though wounded, scarce perceives
the pain ;

And the barb'd javelin stings his breast in vain .
On their whole war untamed the savage flies,
And tears his hunter, or beneath him dies.
Not less resolved, Antenor's valiant heir 685

Confronts Achilles, and awaits the war,
Disdainful of retreat : high held before,
His shield, a broad circumference, he bore ;
Then graceful as he stood in act to throw
The lifted javelin, thus bespoke the foe : 690

" How proud Achilles glories in his fame !
And hopes this day to sink the Trojan name
Beneath her ruins ! Know that hope is vain ;
A thousand woes, a thousand toils remain.
Parents and children our just arms employ, 695
And strong and many are the sons of Troy."

Great as thou art, ev'n thou mayst stain with gore
These Phrygian fields, and press a foreign shore."

He said : with matchless force the javelin flung
Smote on his knee ; the hollow cuishes rung 700
Beneath the pointed steel : but safe from harms
He stands impassive in ethereal arms.

Then fiercely rushing on the daring foe,
His lifted arm prepares the fatal blow :
But, jealous of his fame, Apollo shrouds 705
The godlike Trojan in a veil of clouds.

Safe from pursuit, and shut from mortal view,
Dismiss'd with fame, the favour'd youth withdrew.
Meanwhile, the god, to cover their escape,
Assumes Agenor's habit, voice, and shape, 710
Flies from the furious chief in this disguise ;
The furious chief still follows where he flies.
Now o'er the fields they stretch with lengthen'd
strides,

Now urge the course where swift Scamander glides :
The god now distant scarce a stride before, 715
Tempts his pursuit, and wheels about the shore ;
While all the flying troops their speed employ,
And pour on heaps into the walls of Troy :
No stop, no stay ; no thought to ask, or tell
Who 'scaped by flight, or who by battle fell. 720
'Twas tumult all, and violence of flight ;
And sudden joy confused, and mix'd affright :
Pale Troy against Achilles shuts her gate ;
And nations breathe, deliver'd from their fate.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Death of Hector.

THE Trojans being safe within the walls, Hector only stays to oppose Achilles—Priam is struck at his approach, and tries to persuade his son to re-enter the town—Hecuba joins her entreaties, but in vain—Hector consults within himself what measures to take; but, at the advance of Achilles, his resolution fails him, and he flies: Achilles pursues him thrice round the walls of Troy—The gods debate concerning the fate of Hector; at length Minerva descends to the aid of Achilles—She deludes Hector in the shape of Deiphobus; he stands the combat, and is slain—Achilles drags the dead body at his chariot, in the sight of Priam and Hecuba—Their lamentations, tears, and despair—Their cries reach the ears of Andromache, who, ignorant of this, was retired into the inner part of the palace; she mounts up to the walls, and beholds her dead husband—She swoons at the spectacle—Her excess of grief and lamentation.—[The thirtieth day still continues. The scene lies under the walls, and on the battlements of Troy.]

THUS to their bulwarks, smit with panic fear,
The herded Ilians rush like driven deer;
There safe they wipe the briny drops away,
And drown in bowls the labours of the day.
Close to the walls, advancing o'er the fields 5
Beneath one roof of well-compacted shields,
March, bending, on the Greeks' imbodied powers,
Far stretching in the shade of Trojan towers.
Great Hector singly staid; chain'd down by fate,
There fix'd he stood before the Scæan gate; 10

Still his bold arms determined to employ,
The guardian still of long-defended Troy.

Apollo now to tired Achilles turns ;
The power confess'd in all his glory burns.
“And what,” he cries, “has Peleus' son in view, 15
With mortal speed a godhead to pursue ?
For not to thee to know the gods is given,
Unskill'd to trace the latent marks of Heaven.
What boots thee now that Troy forsook the plain ?
Vain thy past labour, and thy present vain : 20
Safe in their walls are now her troops bestow'd,
While here thy frantic rage attacks a god.”

The chief incensed : “Too partial god of day !
To check my conquests in the middle way :
How few in Ilion else had refuge found ! 25
What gasping numbers now had bit the ground !
Thou robb'st me of a glory justly mine,
Powerful of godhead, and of fraud divine :
Mean fame, alas ! for one of heavenly strain,
To cheat a mortal who repines in vain.” 30

Then to the city terrible and strong,
With high and haughty steps he tower'd along.
So the proud courser, victor of the prize,
To the near goal with double ardour flies.
Him, as he blazing shot across the field, 35
The careful eyes of Priam first beheld.
Not half so dreadful rises to the sight,
Through the thick gloom of some tempestuous
night,

Orion's dog, (the year when autumn weighs,)
And o'er the feeble stars exerts his rays ; 40
Terrific glory ! for his burning breath
Taints the red air with fevers, plagues, and death.
So flamed his fiery mail. Then wept the sage :
He strikes his reverend head, now white with age :
He lifts his wither'd arms ; obtests the skies ; 45
He calls his much-loved son with feeble cries :
The son, resolved Achilles' force to dare,
Full at the Scæan gates expects the war :

While the sad father on the rampart stands,
And thus adjures him with extended hands : 50
“ Ah, stay not, stay not ! guardless and alone ;
Hector ! my loved, my dearest, bravest son !
Methinks already I behold thee slain,
And stretch'd beneath that fury of the plain.
Implacable Achilles ! mightst thou be 55
To all the gods no dearer than to me !
Thee vultures wild should scatter round the shore,
And bloody dogs grow fiercer from thy gore.
How many valiant sons I late enjoy'd,
Valiant in vain ! by thy cursed arm destroy'd : 60
Or worse than slaughter'd, sold in distant isles
To shameful bondage and unworthy toils.
Two while I speak my eyes in vain explore,
Two from one mother sprung, my Polydore,
And loved Lycaon ; now perhaps no more ! 65
Oh ! if in yonder hostile camp they live,
What heaps of gold, what treasures would I give !
(Their grandsire's wealth by right of birth their
own,
Consign'd his daughter with Lelegia's throne ;)
But if, which Heaven forbid, already lost, 70
All pale they wander on the Stygian coast,
What sorrows then must their sad mother know,
What anguish I ! unutterable wo !
Yet less that anguish, less to her, to me,
Less to all Troy, if not deprived of thee. 75
Yet shun Achilles ! enter yet the wall ;
And spare thyself, thy father, spare us all !
Save thy dear life : or if a soul so brave
Neglect that thought, thy dearer glory save.
Pity while yet I live these silver hairs ! 80
While yet thy father feels the woes he bears,
Yet cursed with sense ! a wretch whom in his rage
(All trembling on the verge of helpless age)
Great Jove has placed, sad spectacle of pain !
The bitter dregs of fortune's cup to drain : 85

To fill with scenes of death his closing eyes,
And number all his days by miseries ;
My heroes slain, my bridal bed o'erturn'd,
My daughters ravish'd, and my city burn'd,
My bleeding infants dash'd against the floor ; 90
These I have yet to see, perhaps yet more !
Perhaps ev'n I, reserved by angry fate
The last sad relic of my ruin'd state,
(Dire pomp of sovereign wretchedness !) must fall,
And stain the pavement of my regal hall ; 95
Where famish'd dogs, late guardians of my door,
Shall lick their mangled master's spatter'd gore.
Yet for my sons I thank ye, gods ! 'twas well ;
Well have they perish'd, for in fight they fell.
Who dies in youth and vigour dies the best, 100
Struck through with wounds, all honest on the breast.
But when the fates, in fulness of their rage,
Spurn the hoar head of unresisting age,
In dust the reverend lineaments deform,
And pour to dogs the lifeblood scarcely warm ; 105
This, this is misery ! the last, the worst
"That man can feel ; man, fated to be cursed !"
He said, and acting what no words could say,
Rent from his head the silver locks away.
With him the mournful mother bears a part ; 110
Yet all their sorrows turn not Hector's heart :
The zone unbraced, her bosom she display'd ;
And thus, fast falling the salt tears, she said :
"Have mercy on me, oh my son ! revere
The words of age ; attend a parent's prayer ! 115
If ever thee in these fond arms I press'd,
Or still'd thy infant clamours at this breast,
Ah ! do not thus our helpless years forego,
But by our walls secured repel the foe.
Against his rage if singly thou proceed, 120
Shouldst thou, (but Heaven avert it !) shouldst thou
 bleed,
Nor must thy corse lie honour'd on the bier,
Nor spouse nor mother grace thee with a tear ;

Far from our pious rites, those dear remains
Must feast the vultures on the naked plains." 125

So they, while down their cheeks the torrents roll ;
But fix'd remains the purpose of his soul :
Resolved he stands, and with a fiery glance
Expects the hero's terrible advance.

So roll'd up in his den, the swelling snake 130

Beholds the traveller approach the brake ;
When fed with noxious herbs his turgid veins
Have gather'd half the poisons of the plains :

He burns, he stiffens with collected ire,
And his red eyeballs glare with living fire. 135

Beneath a turret, on his shield reclined,
He stood, and question'd thus his mighty mind :

"Where lies my way ? To enter in the wall !
Honour and shame the ungenerous thought recall :
Shall proud Polydamas before the gate 140

Proclaim, his counsels are obey'd too late,
Which timely follow'd but the former night,
What numbers had been saved by Hector's flight ?

That wise advice rejected with disdain,
I feel my folly in my people slain. 145

Methinks my suffering country's voice I hear,
But most her worthless sons insult my ear,
On my rash courage charge the chance of war,
And blame those virtues which they cannot share.

No—if I e'er return, return I must 150

Glorious, my country's terror laid in dust :

Or if I perish, let her see me fall

In field at least, and fighting for her wall.

And yet suppose these measures I forego,
Approach unarm'd and parley with the foe, 155

The warrior shield, the helm, and lance, lay down,
And treat on terms of peace to save the town :

The wife withheld, the treasure ill-detain'd,
(Cause of the war, and grievance of the land,)

With honourable justice to restore, 160

And add half Ilion's yet remaining store,

Which Troy shall sworn produce; that injured
Greece

May share our wealth, and leave our walls in peace.

But why this thought? Unarm'd if I should go,

What hope of mercy from this vengeful foe, 165

But womanlike to fall, and fall without a blow?

We greet not here as man conversing man,

Met at an oak, or journeying o'er a plain;

No season now for calm familiar talk,

Like youths and maidens in an evening walk: 170

War is our business; but to whom is given

To die or triumph, that determine Heaven!"

Thus pondering, like a god the Greek drew nigh,

His dreadful plumage nodded from on high;

The Pelian javelin in his better hand 175

Shot trembling rays that glitter'd o'er the land;

And on his breast the beamy splendours shone,

Like Jove's own lightning or the rising sun.

As Hector sees, unusual terrors rise,

Struck by some god, he fears, recedes, and flies; 180

He leaves the gates, he leaves the walls behind:

Achilles follows like the winged wind.

Thus at the panting dove a falcon flies:

(The swiftest racer of the liquid skies:)

Just when he holds or thinks he holds his prey, 185

Obliquely wheeling through the aerial way;

With open beak and shrilling cries he springs,

And aims his claws, and shoots upon his wings:

No less fore right the rapid chase they held,

One urged by fury, one by fear impell'd; 190

Now circling round the walls their course maintain,

Where the high watch tower overlooks the plain;

Now where the fig trees spread their umbrage broad

(A wider compass) smoke along the road.

Next by Scamander's double source they bound, 195

Where two famed fountains burst the parted ground;

This hot through scorching clefts is seen to rise,

With exhalations steaming to the skies;

That the green banks in summer's heat o'erflows,
Like crystal clear, and cold as winter snows. 200
Each gushing fount a marble cistern fills,
Whose polish'd bed receives the falling rills ;
Where Trojan dames (ere yet alarm'd by Greece)
Wash'd their fair garments in the days of peace.
By these they pass'd, one chasing, one in flight : 205
(The mighty fled pursued by stronger might.)

Swift was the course ; no vulgar prize they play,
No vulgar victim must reward the day ;
(Such as in races crown the speedy strife ;)
The prize contended was great Hector's life. 210

As when some hero's funerals are decreed
In grateful honour of the mighty dead ;
Where high rewards the vigorous youth inflame ;
(Some golden tripod, or some lovely dame ;)
The panting coursers swiftly turn the goal, 215
And with them turns the raised spectator's soul :
Thus three times round the Trojan wall they fly ;
The gazing gods lean forward from the sky :
To whom, while eager on the chase they look,
The sire of mortals and immortals spoke : 220

"Unworthy sight ! the man beloved of Heaven,
Behold, inglorious round yon city driven !
My heart partakes the generous Hector's pain ;
Hector, whose zeal whole hecatombs has slain,
Whose grateful fumes the gods received with joy,
From Ida's summits and the towers of Troy : 226
Now see him flying ! to his fears resign'd,
And fate and fierce Achilles close behind.
Consult, ye powers ! ('tis worthy your debate,)
Whether to snatch him from impending fate, 230
Or let him bear, by stern Pelides slain,
(Good as he is,) the lot imposed on man ?"

Then Pallas thus : " Shall he whose vengeance
forms
The forky bolt, and blackens heaven with storms,
Shall he prolong one Trojan's forfeit breath, 235
A man, a mortal, preordain'd to death,

And will no murmurs fill the courts above ?
No gods indignant blame their partial Jove ?”

“Go, then,” return’d the sire, “without delay,
Exert thy will : I give the fates their way.” 240
Swift at the mandate pleased Tritonia flies,
And stoops impetuous from the cleaving skies.

As through the forest o’er the vale and lawn,
The well-breathed beagle drives the flying fawn ;
In vain he tries the covert of the brakes, 245
Or deep beneath the trembling thicket shakes ;
Sure of the vapour in the tainted dew,
The certain hound his various maze pursues :
Thus step by step, where’er the Trojan wheel’d,
There swift Achilles compass’d round the field. 250
Oft as to reach the Dardan gates he bends,
And hopes the assistance of his pitying friends,
(Whose showering arrows, as he coursed below,
From the high turrets might oppress the foe,)
So oft Achilles turns him to the plain : 255
He eyes the city, but he eyes in vain.

As men in slumber seem with speedy pace
One to pursue, and one to lead the chase,
Their sinking limbs the fancied course forsake,
Nor this can fly, nor that can overtake : 260
No less the labouring heroes pant and strain,
While that but flies, and this pursues in vain.

What god, oh muse ! assisted Hector’s force,
With fate itself so long to hold the course ?
Phœbus it was ; who in his latest hour 265
Endued his knees with strength, his nerves with
power ;

And great Achilles, lest some Greek’s advance
Should snatch the glory from his lifted lance,
Sign’d to the troops to yield his foe the way,
And leave untouch’d the honours of the day. 270
Jove lifts the golden balances that show
The fates of mortal men and things below ;
Here each contending hero’s lot he tries,
And weighs with equal hand their destinies. 274

Low sinks the scale surcharged with Hector's fate ;
Heavy with death it sinks, and hell receives the
weight.

Then Phœbus left him. Fierce Minerva flies
To stern Pelides, and triumphing cries :
" Oh, loved of Jove ! this day our labours cease,
And conquest blazes with full beams on Greece. 280
Great Hector falls : that Hector famed so far,
Drunk with renown, insatiable of war,
Falls by thy hand and mine : nor force nor flight
Shall more avail him, nor his god of light.
See where in vain he supplicates above, 285
Roll'd at the feet of unrelenting Jove ;
Rest here : myself will lead the Trojan on,
And urge to meet the fate he cannot shun."

Her voice divine the chief with joyful mind
Obey'd ; and rested, on his lance reclined. 290
While like Deiphobus the martial dame,
(Her face, her gesture, and her arms the same,)
In show an aid, by hapless Hector's side
Approach'd, and greets him thus with voice belied :

" Too long, oh Hector ! have I borne the sight 295
Of this distress, and sorrow'd in thy flight :
It fits us now a noble stand to make,
And here as brothers equal fates partake."

Then he : " Oh prince ! allied in blood and fame,
Dearer than all that own a brother's name ; 300
Of all that Hecuba to Priam bore,
Long tried, long loved ; much loved, but honour'd
more !

Since you of all our numerous race alone
Defend my life, regardless of your own." 304

Again the goddess : " Much my father's prayer,
And much my mother's press'd me to forbear :
My friends embraced my knees, adjured my stay,
But stronger love impell'd, and I obey.
Come then, the glorious conflict let us try,
Let the steel sparkle, and the javelin fly : 310

Or let us stretch Achilles on the field,
Or to his arm our bloody trophies yield."

Fraudful she said ; then swiftly march'd before :
The Dardan hero shuns his foe no more.
Sternly they met. The silence Hector broke ; 315
His dreadful plumage nodded as he spoke :

" Enough, oh son of Peleus ! Troy has view'd
Her walls thrice circled, and her chief pursued :
But now some god within me bids me try
Thine, or my fate : I kill thee, or I die. 320
Yet on the verge of battle let us stay,
And for a moment's space suspend the day ;
Let heaven's high powers be call'd to arbitrate
The just conditions of this stern debate.

(Eternal witnesses of all below, 325
And faithful guardians of the treasured vow !)
To them I swear ; if, victor in the strife,
Jove by these hands shall shed thy noble life,
No vile dishonour shall thy corpse pursue :
Stripp'd of its arms alone, (the conqueror's due,) 330
The rest to Greece uninjured I'll restore :
Now plight thy mutual oath : I ask no more."

" Talk not of oaths," the dreadful chief replies,
While anger flash'd from his disdainful eyes ;
" Detested as thou art, and ought to be, 335
Nor oath nor pact Achilles plights with thee.
Such pacts as lambs and rabid wolves combine,
Such leagues as men and furious lions join,
To such I call the gods ! one constant state
Of lasting rancour and eternal hate ; 340
No thought but rage and never-ceasing strife,
'Till death extinguish rage, and thought, and life.
Rouse then thy forces this important hour,
Collect thy soul, and call forth all thy power.
No further subterfuge, no further chance ; 345
'Tis Pallas, Pallas gives thee to my lance.
Each Grecian ghost by thee deprived of breath
Now hovers round, and calls thee to thy death."

He spoke, and launch'd his javelin at the foe ;
But Hector shunn'd the meditated blow : 350
He stoop'd, while o'er his head the flying spear
Sung innocent, and spent its force in air.

Minerva watch'd it falling on the land,
'Then drew and gave to great Achilles' hand,
Unseen of Hector, who, elate with joy, 355
Now shakes his lance, and braves the dread of Troy.

"The life you boasted to that javelin given,
Prince ! you have miss'd. My fate depends on
Heaven.

To thee, presumptuous as thou art, unknown
Or what must prove my fortune or thy own. 360

Boasting is but an art our fears to blind,
And with false terror sink another's mind.

But know, whatever fate I am to try,
By no dishonest wound shall Hector die ;
I shall not fall a fugitive at least, 365

My soul shall bravely issue from my breast.
But first try thou my arm ; and may this dart
End all my country's woes, deep buried in thy heart !"

The weapon flew, its course unerring held ;
Unerring, but the heavenly shield repell'd 370

'The mortal dart ; resulting with a bound
From off the ringing orb, it struck the ground.

Hector beheld his javelin fall in vain,
Nor other lance nor other hope remain ;
He calls Deiphobus, demands a spear, 375
In vain, for no Deiphobus was there.

All comfortless he stands ; then, with a sigh,
"'Tis so—Heaven wills it, and my hour is nigh !
I deem'd Deiphobus had heard my call,
But he secure lies guarded in the wall. 380

A god deceived me : Pallas, 'twas thy deed :
Death and black fate approach ! 'tis I must bleed
No refuge now, no succour from above,
Great Jove deserts me, and the son of Jove,
Propitious once, and kind ! then welcome fate ! 385

'Tis true I perish, yet I perish great :

Yet in a mighty deed I shall expire,
Let future ages hear it and admire!"

Fierce at the word his weighty sword he drew,
And all-collected on Achilles flew. 390

So Jove's bold bird, high balanced in the air,
Stoops from the clouds to truss the quivering hare.

Nor less Achilles his fierce soul prepares;
Before his breast the flaming shield he bears,
Refulgent orb! above his fourfold cone 395

The gilded horse hair sparkled in the sun.

Nodding at every step, (Vulcanian frame!)

And as he moved his figure seem'd on flame.

As radiant Hesper shines with keener light,
Far beaming o'er the silver host of night, 400

When all the starry train emblaze the sphere:

So shone the point of great Achilles' spear.

In his right hand he waves the weapon round,

Eyes the whole man, and meditates the wound:
But the rich mail Patroclus lately wore 405

Securely cased the warrior's body o'er;

One place at length he spies to let in fate,

Where 'tween the neck and throat the jointed plate

Gave entrance: through that penetrable part

Furious he drove the well-directed dart: 410

Nor pierced the windpipe yet, nor took the power

Of speech, unhappy! from thy dying hour.

Prone on the field the bleeding warrior lies,

While thus triumphing stern Achilles cries:

"At last is Hector stretch'd upon the plain, 415

Who fear'd no vengeance for Patroclus slain?

Then, prince, you should have fear'd what now you
feel;

Achilles absent was Achilles still.

Yet a short space the great avenger staid,

Then low in dust thy strength and glory laid. 420

Peaceful he sleeps with all our rights adorn'd,

For ever honour'd and for ever mourn'd:

While cast to all the rage of hostile power,

The birds shall mangle and the dogs devour." 424

Then Hector, fainting at the approach of death :
" By thy own soul ! by those who gave thee breath !
By all the sacred prevalence of prayer !
Ah, leave me not for Grecian dogs to tear !
The common rites of sepulture bestow
To soothe a father's and a mother's wo ; 430
Let their large gifts procure an urn at least,
And Hector's ashes in his country rest."

" No, wretch accursed !" relentless he replies,
Flames as he spoke shot flashing from his eyes,
" Not those who gave me breath should bid me spare,
Nor all the sacred prevalence of prayer. 436
Could I myself the bloody banquet join !
No ; to the dogs that carcass I resign.
Should Troy to bribe me bring forth all her store,
And giving thousands, offer thousands more ; 440
Should Dardan Priam, and his weeping dame,
Drain their whole realm to buy one funeral flame :
Their Hector on the pile they should not see,
Nor rob the vultures of one limb of thee."

Then thus the chief his dying accents drew . 445
" Thy rage implacable too well I knew :
The furies that relentless breast have steel'd,
And cursed thee with a heart that cannot yield.
Yet think, a day will come, when fate's decree
And angry gods shall wreak this wrong on thee ; 450
Phœbus and Paris shall avenge my fate,
And stretch thee here before the Scæan gate."

He ceased. The fates suppress'd his labouring
breath,
And his eyes stiffen'd at the hand of death ;
To the dark realm the spirit wings its way, 455
(The manly body left a load of clay,)
And plaintive glides along the dreary coast,
A naked, wand'ring, melancholy ghost !

Achilles, musing as he roll'd his eyes
O'er the dead hero, thus, unheard, replies : 460
" Die thou the first ! When Jove and heaven ordain,
I follow thee : " he said, and stripp'd the slain.

Then forcing backward from the gaping wound
The reeking javelin, cast it on the ground. 464

The thronging Greeks behold with wond'ring eyes
His manly beauty and superior size :
While some ignobler the great dead deface
With wounds ungenerous, or with taunts disgrace :
“ How changed that Hector, who like Jove of late
Sent lightning on our fleets, and scatter'd fate ! ” 470

High o'er the slain the great Achilles stands,
Begirt with heroes and surrounding bands,
And thus aloud, while all the host attends :
“ Princes and leaders ! countrymen and friends !
Since now at length the powerful will of Heaven 475
The dire destroyer to our arm has given,
Is not 'Troy fall'n already ? Haste, ye powers !
See if already their deserted towers

Are left unmann'd ; or if they yet retain
The souls of heroes, their great Hector slain. 480

But what is 'Troy, or glory what, to me ?
Or why reflects my mind on aught but thee,
Divine Patroclus ! Death has seal'd his eyes ;
Unwept, unhonour'd, uninterr'd, he lies !

Can his dear image from my soul depart, 485
Long as the vital spirit moves my heart ?

If, in the melaucholy shades below,
The flames of friends and lovers cease to glow,
Yet mine shall sacred last ; mine undecay'd
Burn on through death, and animate my shade. 490

Meanwhile, ye sons of Greece, in triumph bring
The corse of Hector, and your pæans sing.
Be this the song, slow moving towards the shore,
‘ Hector is dead, and Ilion is no more. ’ ”

Then his fell soul a thought of vengeance bred,
Unworthy of himself and of the dead. 496

The nervous ankles bored, his feet he bound
With thongs inserted through the double wound ;
These fix'd up high behind the rolling wain,
His graceful head was trail'd along the plain. 500

Proud on his car the insulting victor stood,
And bore aloft his arms distilling blood.
He smites the steeds ; the rapid chariot flies ;
The sudden clouds of circling dust arise.
Now lost is all that formidable air ; 505
The face divine, and long, descending hair,
Purple the ground, and streak the sable sand ;
Deform'd, dishonour'd, in his native land,
Given to the rage of an insulting throng !
And in his parents' sight now dragg'd along ! 510
The mother first beheld with sad survey :
She rent her tresses, venerably gray,
And cast far off the regal veils away.
With piercing shrieks his bitter fate she moans,
While the sad father answers groans with groans ;
Tears after tears his mournful cheeks o'erflow, 516
And the whole city wears one face of wo :
No less than if the rage of hostile fires,
From her foundations curling to her spires,
O'er the proud citadel at length should rise, 520
And the last blaze send Ilion to the skies.
The wretched monarch of the falling state
Distracted presses to the Dardan gate.
Scarce the whole people stop his desperate course,
While strong affliction gives the feeble force : 525
Grief tears his heart, and drives him to and fro,
In all the raging impotence of wo.
At length he roll'd in dust, and thus begun,
Imploring all, and naming one by one :
“ Ah ! let me, let me go where sorrow calls ; 530
I, only I, will issue from your walls,
(Guide or companion, friends ! I ask you none,)
And bow before the murderer of my son.
My grief perhaps his pity may engage ;
Perhaps at least he may respect my age. 535
He has a father too ; a man like me ;
One not exempt from age and misery.
(Vigorous no more, as when his young embrace
Begot this pest of me and all my race.)

How many valiant sons, in early bloom, 540
 Has that cursed hand sent headlong to the tomb !
 Thee, Hector ! last : thy loss divinely brave,
 Sinks my sad soul with sorrow to the grave.
 Oh had thy gentle spirit pass'd in peace,
 The son expiring in the sire's embrace, 545
 While both thy parents wept thy fatal hour,
 And bending o'er thee, mix'd the tender shower !
 Some comfort that had been, some sad relief,
 To melt in full satiety of grief !"

Thus wail'd the father grovelling on the ground,
 And all the eyes of Ilion stream'd around. 551

Amid her matrons Hecuba appears—
 (A mourning princess, and a train in tears.)
 " Ah, why has Heaven prolong'd this hated breath,
 Patient of horrors, to behold thy death ! 555
 Oh Hector ! late thy parents' pride and joy,
 The boast of nations ! the defence of Troy !
 To whom her safety and her fame she owed ;
 Her chief, her hero, and almost her god !
 Oh fatal change ! become in one sad day 560
 A senseless corse ! inanimated clay !"

But not as yet the fatal news had spread
 To fair Andromache, of Hector dead ;
 As yet no messenger had told his fate,
 Nor e'en his stay without the Scæan gate. 565
 Far in the close recesses of the dome,
 Pensive she plied the melancholy loom ;
 A growing work employ'd her secret hours,
 Confusedly gay with intermingled flowers.
 Her fair-hair'd handmaids heat the brazen urn, 570
 The bath preparing for her lord's return :
 In vain : . . as ! her lord returns no more !
 Unbathed he lies, and bleeds along the shore.
 Now from the walls the clamours reach her ear,
 And all her members shake with sudden fear ; 575
 Forth from her ivory hand the shuttle falls,
 As thus, astonish'd, to her maids she calls :

“Ah! follow me!” she cried; “what plaintive
noise

Invades my ear? ’Tis sure my mother’s voice.
My faltering knees their trembling frame desert, 580
A pulse unusual flutters at my heart;
Some strange disaster, some reverse of fate
(Ye gods, avert it!) threatens the Trojan state.
Far be the omen which my thoughts suggest!
But much I fear my Hector’s dauntless breast 585
Confronts Achilles; chased along the plain,
Shut from our walls! I fear, I fear him slain!
Safe in the crowd he ever scorn’d to wait,
And sought for glory in the jaws of fate:
Perhaps that noble heat has cost his breath, 590
Now quench’d for ever in the arms of death.”

She spoke; and furious with distracted pace,
Fears in her heart, and anguish in her face,
Flies through the dome, the maids her steps pursue,
And mounts the walls, and sends around her view.
Too soon her eyes the killing object found, 596
The godlike Hector dragg’d along the ground.
A sudden darkness shades her swimming eyes;
She faints, she falls; her breath, her colour, flies.
Her hair’s fair ornaments, the braids that bound, 600
The net that held them, and the wreath that crown’d,
The veil and diadem flew far away—
(The gift of Venus on her bridal day.)
Around a train of weeping sisters stands,
To raise her sinking with assistant hands. 605
Scarce from the verge of death recall’d, again
She faints, or but recovers to complain.

“Oh wretched husband of a wretched wife!
Born with one fate to one unhappy life!
For sure one star its baneful beam display’d 610
On Priam’s roof and Hippoplacia’s shade.
From different parents, different climes, we came,
At different periods, yet our fate the same!
Why was my birth to great Aetion owed,
And why was all that tender care bestow’d? 615

Would I had never been ! Oh thou, the ghost
Of my dead husband, miserably lost !
Thou to the dismal realms for ever gone !
And I abandon'd, desolate, alone !
An only child, once comfort of my pains, 620
Sad product now of hapless love remains !
No more to smile upon his sire, no friend
To help him now ! no father to defend !
For should he 'scape the sword, the common doom,
What wrongs attend him, and what griefs to come !
E'en from his own paternal roof expell'd, 626
Some stranger ploughs his patrimonial field.
The day that to the shades the father sends
Robs the sad orphan of his father's friends :
He, wretched outcast of mankind ! appears 630
For ever sad, for ever bathed in tears !
Among the happy unregarded he
Hangs on the robe or trembles at the knee ;
While those his father's former bounty fed
Nor reach the goblet nor divide the bread ! 635
The kindest but his present wants allay,
To leave him wretched the succeeding day :
Frugal compassion ! Heedless they who boast
Both parents still, nor feel what he has lost,
Shall cry, ' Begone ! thy father feasts not here : ' 640
The wretch obeys, retiring with a tear.
Thus wretched, thus retiring all in tears,
To my sad soul Astyanax appears !
Forced by repeated insults to return,
And to his widow'd mother vainly mourn. 645
He who, with tender delicacy bred,
With princes sported, and on dainties fed,
And when still evening gave him up to rest
Sunk oft in down upon the nurse's breast,
Must—ah, what must he not ? Whom Ilion calls
Astyanax, from her well-guarded walls, 651
Is now that name no more, unhappy boy !
Since now no more thy father guards his Troy.

But thou, my Hector! liest exposed in air,
Far from thy parents' and thy consort's care, 655
Whose hand in vain, directed by her love,
The martial scarf and robe of triumph wove.
Now to devouring flames be these a prey,
Useless to thee from this accursed day!
Yet let the sacrifice at least be paid, 660
An honour to the living, not the dead!"

So spake the mournful dame: her matrons hear,
Sigh back her sighs, and answer tear with tear.

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Funeral Games in Honour of Patroclus.

ACHILLES and the Myrmidons do honours to the body of Patroclus—After the funeral feast he retires to the seashore, where, falling asleep, the ghost of his friend appears to him, and demands the rites of burial; the next morning the soldiers are sent with mules and wagons to fetch wood for the pyre—The funeral procession, and the offering their hair to the dead—Achilles sacrifices several animals, and lastly twelve Trojan captives at the pile; then sets fire to it—He pays libations to the winds, which, at the instance of Iris, rise, and raise the flames—When the pile has burned all night, they gather the bones, place them in an urn of gold, and raise the tomb—Achilles institutes the funeral games; the chariot race, the fight of the cæstus, the wrestling, the foot race, the single combat, the discus, the shooting with arrows, the darting the javelin; the various descriptions of which, and the various success of the several antagonists, make the greater part of the book.—[In this book ends the thirtieth day. The night following, the ghost of Patroclus appears to Achilles; the one-and-thirtieth day is employed in felling the timber of the pile; the two-and-thirtieth in burning it; and the three-and-thirtieth in the games. The scene is generally on the seashore.]

Thus humbled in the dust, the pensive train
Through the sad city mourn'd her hero slain.
The body, soil'd with dust, and black with gore,
Lies on broad Hellespont's resounding shore:
The Grecians seek their ships, and clear the strand,
All but the martial Myrmidonian band; 6
These yet assembled great Achilles holds,
And the stern purpose of his mind unfolds:

“Not yet, my brave companions of the war,
Release your smoking coursers from the car; 10
But, with his chariot each in order led,
Perform due honours to Patroclus dead.

Ere yet from rest or food we seek relief,
Some rite remain to glut our rage of grief.”
The troops obey'd; and thrice in order led 15

(Achilles first) their coursers round the dead;
And thrice their sorrows and laments renew:
Tears bathe their arms, and tears the sands bedew.
For such a warrior Thetis aids their wo,
Melts their strong hearts, and bids their eyes to
flow. 20

But chief, Pelides: thick succeeding sighs
Burst from his heart, and torrents from his eyes:
His slaughtering hands, yet red with blood, he laid
On his dead friend's cold breast, and thus he said:

“All hail, Patroclus! let thy honour'd ghost 25
Hear, and rejoice on Pluto's dreary coast;
Behold! Achilles' promise is complete;
The bloody Hector stretch'd before thy feet.
Lo! to the dogs his carcass I resign;
And twelve sad victims of the Trojan line, 30
Sacred to vengeance, instant, shall expire;
Their lives effused around thy funeral pyre.”

Gloomy he said, and, horrible to view,
Before the bier the bleeding Hector threw,
Prone on the dust. The Myrmidons around 35
Unbraced their armour, and the steeds unbound.

All to Achilles' sable ship repair,
Frequent and full, the genial feast to share.
Now from the well-fed swine black smokes aspire,
The bristly victims hissing o'er the fire: 40

The huge ox bellowing falls; with feebler cries
Expires the goat; the sheep in silence dies.
Around the hero's prostrate body flow'd
In one promiscuous stream the reeking blood:
And now a band of Argive monarchs brings 45
The glorious victor to the king of kings.

From his dead friend the pensive warrior went,
With steps unwilling, to the regal tent.
The attending heralds, as by office bound,
With kindled flames the tripod vase surround ; 50
To cleanse his conquering hands from hostile gore,
They urged in vain ; the chief refused, and swore :
“ No drop shall touch me by almighty Jove !
The first and greatest of the gods above !
Till on the pyre I place thee ; till I rear 55
The grassy mound, and clip thy sacred hair.
Some ease at least those pious rites may give,
And soothe my sorrows while I bear to live.
Howe’er, reluctant as I am, I stay
And share your feast ; but with the dawn of day, 60
Oh king of men ! it claims thy royal care,
That Greece the warrior’s funeral pile prepare,
And bid the forests fall : (such rites are paid
To heroes slumbering in eternal shade.)
Then, when his earthly part shall mount in fire, 65
Let the leagued squadrons to their posts retire.”
He spoke ; they hear him, and the word obey ;
The rage of hunger and of thirst allay,
Then ease in sleep the labours of the day.
But great Pelides, stretch’d along the shore, 70
Where dash’d on rocks the broken billows roar,
Lies inly groaning ; while on either hand
The martial Myrmidons confusedly stand.
Along the grass his languid members fall,
Tired with his chase around the Trojan wall ; 75
Hush’d by the murmurs of the rolling deep,
At length he sinks in the soft arms of sleep.
When, lo ! the shade, before his closing eyes
Of sad Patroclus rose, or seem’d to rise ;
In the same robe he living wore, he came ; 80
In stature, voice, and pleasing look, the same.
The form familiar hover’d o’er his head :
“ And sleeps Achilles ? ” thus the phantom said ;
“ Sleeps my Achilles, his Patroclus dead ?

Living, I seem'd his dearest, tenderest care, 85
But now forgot, I wander in the air.

Let my pale corse the rites of funeral know,
And give me entrance in the realms below :
Till then, the spirit finds no resting-place,
But here and there the unbodied spectres chase 90
The vagrant dead around the dark abode,
Forbid to cross the irremeable flood.

Now give thy hand ; for to the farther shore
When once we pass, the soul returns no more :
When once the last funereal flames ascend, 95
No more shall meet Achilles and his friend ;
No more our thoughts to those we loved make
known ;

Or quit the dearest, to converse alone.
Me fate has sever'd from the sons of earth,
'The fate foredoom'd that waited from my birth : 100
Thee too it waits ; before the 'Trojan wall
Ev'n great and godlike thou, art doom'd to fall.
Hear then ; and as in fate and love we join,
Ah, suffer that my bones may rest with thine !
'Together have we lived ; together bred ; 105
One house received us, and one table fed :
That golden urn thy goddess mother gave,
May mix our ashes in one common grave."

"And is it thou ?" he answers : "to my sight
Once more return'st thou from the realms of night ?
Oh more than brother ! Think each office paid, 111
Whate'er can rest a discontented shade ;
But grant one last embrace, unhappy boy !
Afford at least that melancholy joy."

He said, and with his longing arms essay'd 115
In vain to grasp the visionary shade ;
Like a thin smoke he sees the spirit fly,
And hears a feeble lamentable cry.
Confused he wakes ; amazement breaks the bands
Of golden sleep, and, starting from the sands, 120
Pensive he muses with uplifted hands :

“ ’Tis true, ’tis certain ; man, though dead, retains
Part of himself ; the immortal mind remains :
The form subsists without the body’s aid,
Aerial semblance, and an empty shade ! 125
This night my friend, so late in battle lost,
Stood at my side, a pensive, plaintive ghost ;
Ev’n now familiar, as in life, he came,
Alas ! how different ! yet how like the same ! ”

Thus while he spoke, each eye grew big with
tears :

And now the rosy-finger’d Morn appears, 131
Shows every mournful face with tears o’erspread,
And glares on the pale visage of the dead.

But Agamemnon, as the rites demand,
With mules and wagons sends a chosen band 135
To load the timber, and the pile to rear ;
A charge consign’d to Merion’s faithful care.
With proper instruments they take the road,
Axes to cut, and ropes to sling the load.

First march the heavy mules, securely slow, 140
O’er hills, o’er dales, o’er crags, o’er rocks they
go :

Jumping, high o’er the shrubs of the rough ground,
Rattle the clatt’ring cars, and the shock’d axles
bound.

But when arrived at Ida’s spreading woods,
(Fair Ida, water’d with descending floods,) 145
Loud sounds the axe, redoubling strokes on strokes ;
On all sides round the forest hurls her oaks
Headlong. Deep echoing groan the thickets brown ;
Then rustling, crackling, crashing, thunder down.
The wood the Grecians cleave, prepared to burn ; 150
And the slow mules the same rough road return.
The sturdy woodmen equal burdens bore
(Such charge was given them) to the sandy shore ;
There, on the spot which great Achilles show’d,
They eased their shoulders, and disposed the load ;
Circling around the place, where times to come 156
Shall view Patroclus’ and Achilles’ tomb.

The hero bids his martial troops appear
High on their cars in all the pomp of war ;
Each in refulgent arms his limbs attires, 160
All mount their chariots, combatants and squires.
The chariots first proceed, a shining train ;
Then clouds of foot that smoke along the plain ,
Next these a melancholy band appear,
Amid, lay dead Patroclus on the bier : 165
O'er all the corse their scatter'd locks they throw ;
Achilles next, oppress'd with mighty wo,
Supporting with his hands the hero's head,
Bends o'er the extended body of the dead.
Patroclus decent on the appointed ground 170
They place, and heap the sylvan pile around.
But great Achilles stands apart in prayer,
And from his head divides the yellow hair ;
Those curling locks which from his youth he vow'd,
And sacred grew, to Sperchius' honour'd flood : 175
Then sighing, to the deep his locks he cast,
And roll'd his eyes around the watery waste :
“ Sperchius ! whose waves in mazy errors lost,
Delightful roll along my native coast !
To whom we vainly vow'd, at our return, 180
These locks to fall, and hecatombs to burn ;
Full fifty rams to bleed in sacrifice,
Where to the day thy silver fountains rise,
And where in shade of consecrated bowers
Thy altars stand, perfumed with native flowers : 185
So vow'd my father, but he vow'd in vain ;
No more Achilles sees his native plain.
In that vain hope these hairs no longer grow,
Patroclus bears them to the shades below.”
Thus o'er Patroclus while the hero pray'd, 190
On his cold hand the sacred lock he laid.
Once more afresh the Grecian sorrows flow ;
And now the sun had set upon their wo ;
But to the king of men thus spoke the chief :
“ Enough ; Atrides ! give the troops relief : 195

Permit the mourning legions to retire,
And let the chiefs alone attend the pyre ;
The pious care be ours the dead to burn.”
He said : the people to their ships return ;
While those deputed to inter the slain 200
Heap with a rising pyramid the plain.
A hundred feet in length, a hundred wide,
The growing structure spreads on every side ;
High on the top the manly corse they lay,
And well-fed sheep and sable oxen slay : 205
Achilles covered with their fat the dead,
And the piled victims round the body spread ;
Then jars of honey and of fragrant oil
Suspend around, low bending o’er the pile.
Four sprightly coursers with a deadly groan 210
Pour forth their lives, and on the pyre are thrown.
Of nine large dogs, domestic at his board,
Fall two, selected to attend their lord.
Then last of all, and horrible to tell,
Sad sacrifice ! twelve Trojan captives fell. 215
On these the rage of fire victorious preys,
Involves, and joins them in one common blaze.
Smear’d with the bloody rites, he stands on high,
And calls the spirit with a dreadful cry :
“ All hail, Patroclus ! let thy vengeful ghost 220
Hear, and exult on Pluto’s dreary coast.
Behold, Achilles’ promise fully paid,
Twelve Trojan heroes offer’d to thy shade :
But heavier fates on Hector’s corse attend,
Saved from the flames for hungry dogs to rend.” 225
So spake he, threat’ning : but the gods made vain
His threat, and guard inviolate the slain ;
Celestial Venus hover’d o’er his head,
And roseate unguents, heavenly fragrance ! shed :
She watch’d him all the night and all the day, 230
And drove the bloodhounds from their destined prey
Nor sacred Phœbus less employ’d his care ;
He pour’d around a veil of gather’d air,

And kept the nerves undried, the flesh entire,
Against the solar beam and Sirian fire. 235

Nor yet the pile, where dead Patroclus lies,
Smokes, nor as yet the sullen flames arise;
But fast beside, Achilles stood in prayer,
Invoked the gods whose spirit moves the air,
And victims promised, and libations cast 240
To gentle Zephyr and the Boreal blast:
He call'd the aerial powers along the skies
To breathe, and whisper to the fires to rise.
The winged Iris heard the hero's call,
And instant hasten'd to their airy hall, 245
Where, in old Zephyr's open courts on high,
Sat all the blust'ring brethren of the sky.
She shone amid them, on her painted bow;
The rocky pavement glitter'd with the show.
All from the banquet rise, and each invites 250
The various goddess to partake the rites.
"Not so," the dame replied; "I haste to go
To sacred ocean and the floods below:
Ev'n now our solemn hecatombs attend,
And heaven is feasting on the world's green end,
With righteous Æthiops (uncorrupted train!) 256
Far on the extremest limits of the main.
But Peleus' son entreats, with sacrifice,
The western spirit, and the north, to rise;
Let on Patroclus' pile your blast be driven, 260
And bear the blazing honours high to heaven."

Swift as the word she vanish'd from their view;
Swift as the word the winds tumultuous flew;
Forth burst the stormy band with thundering roar,
And heaps on heaps the clouds are toss'd before. 265
To the wide main then stooping from the skies,
The heaving deeps in watery mountains rise:
Troy feels the blast along her shaking walls,
Till on the pile the gather'd tempest falls.
The structure crackles in the roaring fires, 270
And all the night the plenteous flame aspires;

All night Achilles hails Patroclus' soul,
 With large libation from the golden bowl.
 As a poor father, helpless and undone,
 Mourns o'er the ashes of an only son, 275
 Takes a sad pleasure the last bones to burn,
 And pour in tears, ere yet they close the urn.
 So staid Achilles, circling round the shore,
 So watch'd the flames, till now they flame no more.
 'Twas then, emerging through the shades of night,
 The morning planet told the approach of light; 281
 And fast behind, Aurora's warmer ray
 O'er the broad ocean pour'd the golden day :
 Then sunk the blaze, the pile no longer burn'd,
 And to their caves the whistling winds return'd; 285
 Across the Thracian seas their course they bore ;
 The ruffled seas beneath their passage roar.

Then parting from the pile he ceased to weep,
 And sunk to quiet in the embrace of sleep,
 Exhausted with his grief; meanwhile, the crowd
 Of thronging Grecians round Achilles stood; 291
 The tumult waked him: from his eyes he shook
 Unwilling slumber, and the chiefs bespoke :

"Ye kings and princes of the Achaian name!
 First let us quench the yet remaining flame 295
 With sable wine; then, as the rites direct,
 The hero's bones with careful view select :
 (Apart, and easy to be known they lie
 Amid the heap, and obvious to the eye :
 The rest around the margin will be seen 300
 Promiscuous, steeds and immolated men :)
 These, wrapp'd in double cauls of fat, prepare ;
 And in the golden vase dispose with care :
 There let them rest with decent honour laid,
 Till I shall follow to the infernal shade. 305
 Meantime, erect the tomb with pious hands,
 A common structure on the humble sands :
 Hereafter Greece some nobler work may raise,
 And late posterity record our praise."

The Greeks obey ; where yet the embers glow
Wide o'er the pile the sable wine they throw, 311
And deep subsides the ashy heap below.
Next the white bones his sad companions place,
With tears collected, in the golden vase.
The sacred relics to the tent they bore ; 315
The urn a veil of linen cover'd o'er.
That done, they bid the sepulchre aspire,
And cast the deep foundations round the pyre ;
High in the midst they heap the swelling bed
Of rising earth, memorial of the dead. 320
The swarming populace the chief detains,
And leads amid a wide extent of plains ;
There placed them round : then from the ships proceeds
A train of oxen, mules, and stately steeds,
Vases and tripods, (for the funeral games,) 325
Resplendent brass, and more resplendent dames.
First stood the prizes to reward the force
Of rapid racers in the dusty course :
A woman for the first, in beauty's bloom ;
Skill'd in the needle and the labouring loom ; 330
And a large vase, where two bright handles rise,
Of twenty measures its capacious size.
The second victor claims a mare unbroke,
Big with a mule, unknowing of the yoke :
The third a charger yet untouch'd by flame ; 335
Four ample measures held the shining frame :
Two golden talents for the fourth were placed ;
An ample double bowl contents the last.
These in fair order ranged upon the plain,
The hero, rising, thus address'd the train : 340
" Behold the prizes, valiant Greeks ! decreed
To the brave rulers of the racing steed ;
Prizes which none beside ourself could gain,
Should our immortal coursers take the plain :
(A race unrivall'd, which from ocean's god 345
Peleus received, and on his son bestow'd :)

But this no time our vigour to display;
Nor suit, with them, the games of this sad day;
Lost is Patroclus now, that wont to deck
Their flowing manes, and sleek their glossy neck.
Sad, as they shared in human grief, they stand, 351
And trail those graceful honours on the sand;
Let others for the noble task prepare,
Who trust the courser and the flying car."

Fired at his word, the rival racers rise: 355
But far the first, Eumelus hopes the prize.
Famed through Pieria for the fleetest breed,
And skill'd to manage the high-bounding steed.
With equal ardour bold Tydides swell'd,
The steeds of Tros beneath his yoke compell'd, 360
(Which late obey'd the Dardan chief's command,
When scarce a god redeem'd him from his hand.)
Then Menelaus his Podargus brings,
And the famed courser of the king of kings;
Whom rich Echepolus, (more rich than brave,) 365
To 'scape the wars, to Agamemnon gave,
(Æthe her name,) at home to end his days,
Base wealth preferring to eternal praise.
Next him Antilochus demands the course, 369
With beating heart, and cheers his Pylian horse.
Experienced Nestor gives his son the reins,
Directs his judgment, and his heat restrains;
Nor idly warns the holy sire, nor hears
The prudent son with unattending ears. 374

"My son! though youthful ardour fire thy breast,
The gods have loved thee, and with arts have
 bless'd.

Neptune and Jove on thee conferr'd the skill
Swift round the goal to turn the flying wheel.
To guide thy conduct little precept needs;
But slow, and past their vigour, are my steeds. 380
Fear not thy rivals, though for swiftness known;
Compare those rivals' judgment and thy own:
It is not strength, but art obtains the prize,
And to be swift, is less than to be wise. 384

'Tis more by art than force of numerous strokes
The dexterous woodman shakes the stubborn oaks ;
By art the pilot, through the boiling deep
And howling tempest, steers the fearless ship ;
And 'tis the artist wins the glorious course,
Not those who trust in chariots and in horse. 390
In vain ; unskilful to the goal they strive,
And short, or wide, the ungovern'd courser drive :
While with sure skill, though with inferior steeds,
The knowing racer to his end proceeds ;
Fix'd on the goal his eye foreruns the course, 395
His hand unerring steers the steady horse,
And now contracts or now extends the rein,
Observing still the foremost on the plain.
Mark then the goal, 'tis easy to be found ;
Yon aged trunk, a cubit from the ground ; 400
Of some once stately oak the last remains,
Or hardy fir unperish'd with the rains :
Enclosed with stones conspicuous from afar ;
And round, a circle for the wheeling car :
(Some tomb, perhaps, of old, the dead to grace ; 405
Or then, as now, the limit of a race :)
Bear close to this, and warily proceed,
A little bending to the left hand steed ;
But urge the right, and give him all the reins ;
While thy strict hand his fellow's head restrains,
And turns him short ; till, doubling as the roll, 411
The wheel's round naves appear to brush the goal.
Yet (not to break the car, or lame the horse)
Clear of the stony heap direct the course ;
Lest, through incaution failing, thou mayst be 415
A joy to others, a reproach to me.
So shalt thou pass the goal, secure of mind,
And leave unskilful swiftness far behind,
Though thy fierce rival drove the matchless steed
Which bore Adrastus of celestial breed ; 420
Or the famed race, through all the regions known,
'That whirl'd the car of proud Laomedon."

Thus (naught unsaid) the much advising sage
Concludes ; then sat, stiff with unwieldy age.
Next bold Meriones was seen to rise, 425
The last, but not least ardent for the prize.
They mount their seats ; the lots their place dis-
pose :
(Roll'd in his helmet, these Achilles throws.)
Young Nestor leads the race : Eumelus then ;
And next the brother of the king of men : 430
Thy lot, Meriones, the fourth was cast ;
And far the bravest, Diomed, was last.
They stand in order, an impatient train ;
Pelides points the barrier on the plain,
And sends before old Phœnix to the place, 435
To mark the racers, and to judge the race.
At once the coursers from the barrier bound ;
The lifted scourges all at once resound ;
Their heart, their eyes, their voice, they send before :
And up the champaign thunder from the shore : 440
Thick, where they drive, the dusty clouds arise,
And the lost courser in the whirlwind flies ;
Loose on their shoulders the long manes reclined,
Float in their speed, and dance upon the wind :
The smoking chariots, rapid as they bound, 445
Now seem to touch the sky, and now the ground.
While hot for fame, and conquest all their care,
(Each o'er his flying courser hung in air,)
Erect with ardour, poised upon the rein,
They pant, they stretch, they shout along the plain.
Now, the last compass fetch'd around the goal, 451
At the near prize each gathers all his soul,
Each burns with double hope, with double pain,
Tears up the shore, and thunders tow'rd's the main.
First flew Eumelus on Pheretian steeds ; 455
With those of Tros bold Diomed succeeds :
Close on Eumelus' back they puff the wind,
And seem just mounting on his car behind ;
Full on his neck he feels the sultry breeze,
And hovering o'er, their stretching shadow sees. 460

Then had he lost, or left a doubtful prize :
But angry Phœbus to Tydides flies,
Strikes from his hand the scourge, and renders vain
His matchless horses' labour on the plain.
Rage fills his eye with anguish to survey, 465
Snatch'd from his hope the glories of the day.
The fraud celestial Pallas sees with pain,
Springs to her knight, and gives the scourge again,
And fills his steeds with vigour. At a stroke,
She breaks his rival's chariot from the yoke ; 470
No more their way the startled horses held ;
The car reversed, came rattling on the field ;
Shot headlong from his seat, beside the wheel,
Prone on the dust the unhappy master fell ;
His batter'd face and elbows strike the ground ; 475
Nose, mouth, and front, one undistinguish'd wound :
Grief stops his voice, a torrent drowns his eyes ;
Before him far the glad Tydides flies ;
Minerva's spirit drives his matchless pace,
And crowns him victor of the labour'd race. 480
The next, though distant, Menelaus succeeds ;
While thus young Nestor animates his steeds :
" Now, now, my generous pair, exert your force ;
Not that we hope to match 'Tydides' horse,
Since great Minerva wings their rapid way, 485
And gives their lord the honours of the day.
But reach Atrides ! shall his mare outgo
Your swiftness, vanquish'd by a female foe ?
Through your neglect, if lagging on the plain
The last ignoble gift be all we gain, 490
No more shall Nestor's hand your food supply,
The old man's fury rises, and ye die.
Haste then ; yon narrow road before your sight
Presents the occasion, could we use it right." 494
Thus he. The coursers at their master's threat
With quicker steps the sounding champaign beat.
And now Antilochus with nice survey
Observes the compass of the hollow way.

'Twas where by force of wintry torrents torn,
 Fast by the road a precipice was worn: 500
 Here, where but one could pass, to shun the throng
 The Spartan hero's chariot smoked along.
 Close up the venturous youth resolves to keep,
 Still edging near, and bears him tow'ards the steep.
 Atrides, trembling, casts his eyes below, 505
 And wonders at the rashness of his foe.

"Hold, stay your steeds! What madness thus to
 ride

This narrow way! take larger field," he cried,
 "Or both must fall." Atrides cried in vain;
 He flies more fast, and throws up all the rein. 510
 Far as an able arm the disk can send,
 When youthful rivals their full force extend,
 So far, Antilochus, thy chariot flew
 Before the king: he, cautious, backward drew
 His horse compell'd; foreboding in his fears 515
 The rattling ruin of the clashing cars,
 The floundering coursers rolling on the plain,
 And conquest lost through frantic haste to gain;
 But thus upbraids his rival as he flies:
 "Go, furious youth! ungenerous and unwise! 520
 Go, but expect not I'll the prize resign;
 Add perjury to fraud, and make it thine—"
 Then to his steeds with all his force he cries:
 "Be swift, be vigorous, and regain the prize!
 Your rivals, destitute of youthful force, 525
 With fainting knees shall labour in the course,
 And yield the glory yours." The steeds obey;
 Already at the heels they wing their way,
 And seem already to retrieve the day.

Meantime, the Grecians in a ring beheld 530
 The coursers bounding o'er the dusty field.
 The first who mark'd them was the Cretan king.
 High on a rising ground above the ring,
 The monarch sat: from whence with sure survey
 He well observed the chief who led the way, 535

And heard from far his animating cries,
And saw the foremost steed with sharpen'd eyes,
On whose broad front, a blaze of shining white,
Like the full moon, stood obvious to the sight.
He saw; and, rising, to the Greeks begun: 540
“Are yonder horse discern'd by me alone?
Or can ye all another chief survey,
And other steeds, than lately led the way?
Those, though the swiftest, by some god withheld,
Lie sure disabled in the middle field: 545
For since the goal they doubled, round the plain
I search to find them, but I search in vain.
Perchance the reins forsook the driver's hand,
And, turn'd too short, he tumbled on the strand,
Shot from the chariot; while his coursers stray 550
With frantic fury from the destined way.
Rise then some other, and inform my sight;
For these dim eyes, perhaps, discern not right.
Yet sure he seems (to judge by shape and air)
'The great Ætolian chief, renown'd in war.” 555
“Old man!” Oileus rashly thus replies,
“Thy tongue too hastily confers the prize;
Of those who view the course, nor sharpest eyed,
Nor youngest, yet the readiest to decide.
Eumelus' steeds high bounding in the chase, 560
Still, as at first, unrivall'd lead the race,
I well discern him as he shakes the rein,
And hear his shouts victorious o'er the plain.”
Thus he. Idomeneus incensed rejoin'd:
“Barbarous of words! and arrogant of mind! 565
Contentious prince, of all the Greeks beside
The last in merit, as the first in pride!
To vile reproach what answer can we make?
A goblet or a tripod let us stake,
And be the king the judge. The most unwise 570
Will learn their rashness when they pay the price.”
He said; and Ajax, by mad passion borne,
Stern had replied; fierce scorn enhancing scorn

To fell extremes ; but Thetis' godlike son
Awful amid them rose, and thus begun : 575

“ Forbear, ye chiefs ! reproachful to contend :
Much would you blame, should others thus offend :
And lo ! the approaching steeds your contest end.”

No sooner had he spoke, but, thundering near,
Drives through a stream of dust the charioteer. 580
High o'er his head the circling lash he wields ;
His bounding horses scarcely touch the fields ;
His car amid the dusty whirlwind roll'd,
Bright with the mingled blaze of tin and gold,
Refulgent through the cloud : no eye could find 585
The track his flying wheels had left behind :
And the fierce coursers urged their rapid pace
So swift, it seem'd a flight, and not a race.

Now victor at the goal Tydides stands, 589
Quits his bright car, and springs upon the sands ;
From the hot steeds the sweaty torrents stream :
The well-plied whip is hung athwart the beam :
With joy brave Sthenelus receives the prize,
The tripod vase, and dame with radiant eyes :
These to the ships his train triumphant leads ; 595
The chief himself unyokes the panting steeds.

Young Nestor follows, (who by art, not force,
O'erpass'd Atrides,) second in the course.
Behind, Atrides urged the race, more near
Than to the courser in his swift career 600
The following car, just touching with his heel
And brushing with his tail the whirling wheel :
Such and so narrow now the space between
The rivals, late so distant on the green ;
So soon swift Æthe her lost ground regain'd, 605
One length, one moment, had the race obtain'd.

Merion pursued, at greater distance still,
With tardier coursers, and inferior skill.
Last came, Admetus, thy unhappy son :
Slow dragg'd the steeds his batter'd chariot on : 610
Achilles saw, and pitying thus begun :

"Behold! the man whose matchless art surpass'd
The sons of Greece! the ablest, yet the last!
Fortune denies, but justice bids us pay
(Since great Tydides bears the first away) 615
To him the second honours of the day."

The Greeks consent with loud applauding cries,
And then Eumelus had received the prize,
But youthful Nestor, jealous of his fame,
The award opposes, and asserts his claim. 620
"Think not," he cries, "I tamely will resign,
Oh Peleus' son! the mare so justly mine.
What if the gods, the skilful to confound,
Have thrown the horse and horseman to the ground?
Perhaps he sought not heaven by sacrifice, 625
And vows omitted forfeited the prize.
If yet (distinction to thy friend to show,
And please a soul desirous to bestow)
Some gift must grace Eumelus; view thy store
Of beauteous handmaids, steeds, and shining ore;
An ample present let him thence receive, 631
And Greece shall praise thy generous thirst to give.
But this my prize I never shall forego:
This, who but touches, warriors! is my foe."

Thus spake the youth; nor did his words offend;
Pleased with the well-turn'd flattery of a friend, 636
Achilles smiled: "The gift proposed," he cried,
"Antilochus! we shall ourself provide.
With plates of brass the corslet cover'd o'er,
The same renown'd Asteropæus wore, 640
Whose glittering margins raised with silver shine,
(No vulgar gift,) Eumelus, shall be thine."

He said: Automedon, at his command,
The corslet brought and gave it to his hand.
Distinguish'd by his friend, his bosom glows 645
With generous joy: then Menelaus rose;
'The herald placed the sceptre in his hands,
And still'd the clamour of the shouting bands.
Not without cause incensed at Nestor's son,
And inly grieving, thus the king begun: 650

“The praise of wisdom, in thy youth obtain’d,
 An act so rash, Antilochus, has stain’d.
 Robb’d of my glory and my just reward,
 To you, oh Grecians ! be my wrong declared :
 So not a leader shall our conduct blame, 655
 Or judge me envious of a rival’s fame.
 But shall not we, ourselves, the truth maintain ?
 What needs appealing in a fact so plain ?
 What Greek shall blame me, if I bid thee rise,
 And vindicate by oath the ill-gotten prize ? 660
 Rise if thou darest, before thy chariot stand ;
 The driving scourge high lifted in thy hand :
 And touch thy steeds and swear, thy whole intent
 Was but to conquer, not to circumvent.
 Swear by the god whose liquid arms surround 665
 The globe, and whose dread earthquakes heave the
 ground.”

The prudent chief with calm attention heard ;
 Then mildly thus : “Excuse, if youth have err’d :
 Superior as thou art, forgive the offence,
 Nor I thy equal, or in years or sense. 670
 Thou know’st the errors of unripen’d age,
 Weak are its counsels, headlong is its rage.
 The prize I quit, if thou thy wrath resign ;
 The mare, or aught thou ask’st, be freely thine :
 Ere I become (from thy dear friendship torn) 675
 Hateful to thee, and to the gods forsworn.”

So spoke Antilochus ; and at the word
 The mare contested to the king restored.
 Joy swells his soul : as when the vernal grain
 Lifts the green ear above the springing plain, 680
 The fields their vegetable life renew,
 And laugh and glitter with the morning dew ;
 Such joy the Spartan’s shining face o’erspread
 And lifted his gay heart, while thus he said :

“Still may our souls, oh generous youth ! agree.
 ’Tis now Atrides’ turn to yield to thee. 686
 Rash heat perhaps a moment might control,
 Not break, the settled temper of thy soul.

Not but, my friend, 'tis still the wiser way
To wave contention with superior sway ; 690
For ah ! how few, who should like thee offend,
Like thee have talents to regain the friend?
To plead indulgence, and thy fault atone,
Suffice thy father's merit and thy own :
Generous alike for me, the sire and son 695
Have greatly suffer'd, and have greatly done.
I yield ; that all may know my soul can bend,
Nor is my pride preferr'd before my friend."

He said ; and pleased his passion to command,
Resign'd the courser to Noemon's hand, 700
Friend of the youthful chief : himself content,
The shining charger to his vessel sent.
The golden talents Merion next obtain'd ;
The fifth reward, the double bowl, remain'd ;
Achilles this to reverend Nestor bears, 705
And thus the purpose of his gift declares :

" Accept thou this, oh sacred sire !" he said,
" In dear memorial of Patroclus dead ;
Dead, and for ever lost, Patroclus lies,
For ever snatch'd from our desiring eyes ! 710
Take thou this token of a grateful heart :
Though 'tis not thine to hurl the distant dart,
The quoit to toss, the ponderous mace to wield,
Or urge the race, or wrestle on the field :
Thy pristine vigour age has overthrown, 715
But left the glory of the past thy own."

He said, and placed the goblet at his side :
With joy the venerable king replied :
" Wisely and well, my son, thy words have proved
A senior honour'd and a friend beloved ! 720
Too true it is, deserted of my strength,
These wither'd arms and limbs have fail'd at length.
Oh had I now that force I felt of yore,
Known through Buprasium and the Pylian shore !
Victorious then in every solemn game, 725
Ordain'd to Amarynces' mighty name ;

The brave Epeians gave my glory way,
 Ætolians, Pylians, all resign'd the day.
 I quell'd Clytomedes in fights of hand,
 And backward hurl'd Ancaëus on the sand, 730
 Surpass'd Iphyclus in the swift career,
 Phyleus and Polydorus with the spear.
 The sons of Actor won the prize of horse,
 But won by numbers, not by art or force:
 For the famed twins, impatient to survey 735
 Prize after prize by Nestor borne away,
 Sprung to their cars; and with united pains
 One lash'd the coursers, while one ruled the reins.
 Such once I was! Now to these tasks succeeds
 A younger race, that emulate our deeds: 740
 I yield, alas! (to age who must not yield?)
 Though once the foremost hero of the field.
 Go thou, my son, by generous friendship led,
 With martial honours decorate the dead;
 While pleased I take the gift thy hands present; 745
 (Pledge of benevolence and kind intent;)
 Rejoiced, of all the numerous Greeks, to see
 Not one but honours sacred age and me:
 Those due distinctions thou so well canst pay,
 May the just gods return another day!" 750
 Proud of the gift, thus spake the full of days.
 Achilles heard him, prouder of the praise.
 The prizes next are order'd to the field,
 For the bold champions who the cestus wield.
 A stately mule, as yet by toils unbroke, 755
 Of six years' age, unconscious of the yoke,
 Is to the circus led, and firmly bound;
 Next stands a goblet, massy, large, and round.
 Achilles rising, thus: "Let Greece excite
 Two heroes equal to this hardy fight; 760
 Who dares the foe with lifted arms provoke,
 And rush beneath the long-descending stroke.
 On whom Apollo shall the palm bestow,
 And whom the Greeks supreme by conquest know,

This mule his dauntless labours shall repay ; 765
The vanquished bear the massy bowl away."

This dreadful combat great Epeus chose :
High o'er the crowd, enormous bulk ! he rose,
And seized the beast, and thus began to say :
" Stand forth some man, to bear the bowl away ! 770
(Price of his ruin :) for who dares deny
This mule my right, the undoubted victor I ?
Others, 'tis own'd, in fields of battle shine,
But the first honours of this fight are mine ;
For who excels in all ? Then let my foe 775
Draw near, but first his certain fortune know,
Secure this hand shall his whole frame confound,
Mash all his bones, and all his body pound :
So let his friends be nigh, a needful train,
'To heave the batter'd carcass off the plain." 780

The giant spoke ; and in a stupid gaze
The host beheld him, silent with amaze !
'Twas thou, Euryalus ! who durst aspire
To meet his might, and emulate thy sire,
The great Mecistheus ; who in days of yore 785
In Theban games the noblest trophy bore,
(The games ordain'd dead Œdipus to grace,)
And singly vanquish'd the Cadmæan race.
Him great Tydides urges to contend,
Warm with the hopes of conquest for his friend ;
Officious with the cincture girds him round ; 791
And to his wrists the gloves of death are bound.
Amid the circle now each champion stands,
And poises high in air his iron hands ;
With clashing gauntlets now they fiercely close, 795
Their crackling jaws re-echo to the blows,
And painful sweat from all their members flows.
At length Epeus dealt a weighty blow
Full on the cheek of his unwary foe ;
Beneath that ponderous arm's resistless sway 800
Down dropp'd he nerveless, and extended lay :
As a large fish, when winds and waters roar,
By some huge billow dash'd against the shore,

Lies panting : not less batter'd with his wound,
The bleeding hero pants upon the ground. 805
To rear his fallen foe the victor lends,
Scornful, his hand ; and gives him to his friends ;
Whose arms support him, reeling through the throng,
And dragging his disabled legs along ;
Nodding, his head hangs down his shoulder o'er ; 810
His mouth and nostrils pour the clotted gore ;
Wrapp'd round in mists he lies, and lost to thought ;
His friends receive the bowl, too dearly bought.

The third bold game Achilles next demands,
And calls the wrestlers to the level sands : 815
A massy tripod for the victor lies,
Of twice six oxen its reputed price ;
And next, the loser's spirits to restore,
A female captive, valued but at four.
Scarce did the chief the vigorous strife propose, 820
When towerlike Ajax and Ulysses rose.
Amid the ring each nervous rival stands,
Embracing rigid with implicit hands ;
Close lock'd above, their heads and arms are mix'd ;
Below, their planted feet, at distance fix'd : 825
Like two strong rafters which the builder forms
Proof to the wintry winds and howling storms,
Their tops connected, but at wider space
Fix'd on the centre stands their solid base.
Now to the grasp each manly body bends ; 830
The humid sweat from every pore descends ;
Their bones resound with blows ; sides, shoulders,
thighs,
Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours rise.
Nor could Ulysses, for his art renown'd,
O'erturn the strength of Ajax on the ground ; 835
Nor could the strength of Ajax overthrow
The watchful caution of his artful foe.
While the long strife ev'n tired the lookers-on,
'Thus to Ulysses spoke great Telamon :
'Or let me lift thee, chief, or lift thou me : 840
Prove we our force, and Jove the rest decree."

He said, and, straining, heaved him off the ground
With matchless strength ; that time Ulysses found
The strength to evade, and where the nerves combine
His ankle struck : the giant fell supine ; 845
Ulysses following, on his bosom lies ;
Shouts of applause run rattling through the skies.
Ajax to lift, Ulysses next essays ;
He barely stirr'd him, but he could not raise :
His knee lock'd fast, the foe's attempt denied ; 850
And grappling close, they tumble side by side.
Defiled with honourable dust, they roll,
Still breathing strife, and unsubdued of soul :
Again they rage, again to combat rise ;
When great Achilles thus divides the prize : 855
" Your noble vigour, oh my friends, restrain ;
Nor weary out your generous strength in vain.
Ye both have won : let others who excel
Now prove that prowess you have proved so well."
The hero's words the willing chiefs obey, 860
From their tired bodies wipe the dust away,
And, clothed anew, the following games survey.
And now succeed the gifts ordain'd to grace
The youths contending in the rapid race.
A silver urn that full six measures held, 865
By none in weight or workmanship excell'd ;
Sidonian artists taught the frame to shine,
Elaborate, with artifice divine ;
Whence Tyrian sailors did the prize transport,
And gave to Thoas at the Lemnian port : 870
From him descended, good Eunæus heir'd
The glorious gift ; and, for Lycaon spared,
To brave Patroclus gave the rich reward.
Now the same hero's funeral rites to grace,
It stands the prize of swiftness in the race. 875
A well-fed ox was for the second placed ;
And half a talent must content the last.
Achilles rising then bespoke the train :
" Who hope the palm of swiftness to obtain,
Stand forth, and bear these prizes from the plain."

The hero said ; and starting from his place, 881
Oilean Ajax rises to the race ;
Ulysses next ; and he whose speed surpass'd
His youthful equals, Nestor's son the last.
Ranged in a line the ready racers stand ; 885
Pelides points the barrier with his hand ;
All start at once ; Oileus led the race ;
The next Ulysses, measuring pace with pace :
Behind him diligently close, he sped,
As closely following as the running thread 890
The spindle follows, and displays the charms
Of the fair spinster's breast, and moving arms :
Graceful in motion thus, his foe he plies,
And treads each footstep ere the dust can rise :
His glowing breath upon his shoulders plays ; 895
The admiring Greeks loud acclamations raise :
To him they give their wishes, hearts, and eyes,
And send their souls before him as he flies.
Now three times turn'd in prospect of the goal,
The panting chief to Pallas lifts his soul : 900
" Assist, oh goddess !" thus in thought he pray'd ;
And present at his thought descends the maid.
Buoy'd by her heavenly force, he seems to swim,
And feels a pinion lifting every limb.
All fierce and ready now the prize to gain, 905
Unhappy Ajax stumbles on the plain,
(O'erturn'd by Pallas,) where the slippery shore
Was clogg'd with slimy dung, and mingled gore :
(The selfsame place beside Patroclus' pyre,
Where late the slaughter'd victims fed the fire :) 910
Besmear'd with filth, and blotted o'er with clay,
Obscene to sight the rueful racer lay :
The well-fed bull (the second prize) he shared,
And left the urn Ulysses' rich reward.
Then, grasping by the horn the mighty beast, 915
The baffled hero thus the Greeks address'd :
" Accursed fate ! the conquest I forego ;
A mortal I, a goddess was my foe ;

She urged her favourite on the rapid way,
And Pallas, not Ulysses, won the day." 920

Thus sourly wail'd he, sputtering dirt and gore,
A burst of laughter echo'd through the shore.
Antilochus, more humorous than the rest,
Takes the last prize, and takes it with a jest. 924

"Why with our wiser elders should we strive?
The gods still love them, and they always thrive.
Ye see, to Ajax I must yield the prize:
He to Ulysses still more aged and wise:
(A green old age unconscious of decays,
'That proves the hero born in better days!) 930
Behold his vigour in this active race!

Achilles only boasts a swifter pace:
For who can match Achilles? He who can,
Must yet be more than hero, more than man."

The effect succeeds the speech, Pelides cries, 935
"Thy artful praise deserves a better prize,
Nor Greece in vain shall hear thy friend extoll'd:
Receive a talent of the purest gold."
The youth departs content. The host admire
The son of Nestor, worthy of his sire. 940

Next these a buckler, spear, and helm he brings:
Cast on the plain the brazen burden rings:
Arms, which of late divine Sarpedon wore,
And great Patroclus in short triumph bore.
"Stand forth the bravest of our host!" he cries; 945
"Whoever dares deserves so rich a prize;
Now grace the lists before our army's sight,
And sheath'd in steel, provoke his foe to fight.
Who first the jointed armour shall explore,
And stain his rival's mail with issuing gore; 950
The sword Asteropeus possess'd of old
(A Thracian blade distinct with studs of gold)
Shall pay the stroke, and grace the striker's side;
These arms in common let the chiefs divide: 954
For each brave champion, when the combat ends,
A sumptuous banquet at our tent attends."

Fierce at the word, up rose great Tydeus' son,
 And the huge bulk of Ajax Telamon,
 Clad in refulgent steel, on either hand,
 The dreadful chiefs amid the circle stand: 960
 Lowering they meet tremendous to the sight;
 Each Argive bosom beats with fierce delight.
 Opposed in arms not long they idly stood,
 But thrice they closed, and thrice the charge
 renew'd.

A furious pass the spear of Ajax made 965
 Through the broad shield, but at the corslet staid:
 Not thus the foe: his javelin aim'd above
 The buckler's margin, at the neck he drove.
 But Greece now trembling for her hero's life,
 Bade share the honours, and surcease the strife. 970
 Yet still the victor's due Tydides gains,
 With him the sword and studded belt remains.

Then hurl'd the hero thundering on the ground
 A mass of iron, (an enormous round,)
 Whose weight and size the circling Greeks admire,
 Rude from the furnace, and but shaped by fire. 976
 This mighty quoit Aetion wont to rear,
 And from his whirling arm dismiss'd in air;
 The giant by Achilles slain, he stow'd
 Among his spoils this memorable load. 980
 For this, he bids those nervous artists vie,
 That teach the disk to sound along the sky.
 "Let him whose might can hurl this bowl, arise;
 Who farthest hurls it, takes it as his prize:
 If he be one, enrich'd with large domain 985
 Of downs for flocks, and arable for grain,
 Small stock of iron needs that man provide;
 His hinds and swains whole years shall be supplied
 From hence: nor ask the neighb'ring city's aid,
 For ploughshares, wheels, and all the rural trade."

Stern Polypætes stepp'd before the throng, 991
 And great Leonteus, more than mortal strong;
 Whose force with rival forces to oppose,
 Up rose great Ajax; up Epeus rose.

Each stood in order: first Epeus threw: 995
 High o'er the wondering crowds the whirling circle
 flew.

Leonteus next a little space surpass'd,
 And third, the strength of godlike Ajax cast:
 O'er both their marks it flew; till fiercely flung
 From Polypœtes' arm, the discus sung: 1000
 Far as a swain his whirling sheephook throws,
 That distant falls among the grazing cows,
 So past them all the rapid circle flies:
 His friends (while loud applauses shake the skies)
 With force conjoin'd heave off the weighty prize.

Those who in skilful archery contend 1006
 He next invites, the twanging bow to bend:
 And twice ten axes casts amid the round:
 (Ten double edged, and ten that singly wound.)
 The mast, which late a first-rate galley bore, 1010
 The hero fixes in the sandy shore;
 To the tall top a milk-white dove they tie,
 The trembling mark at which their arrows fly.
 "Whose weapon strikes yon fluttering bird, shall
 bear

These two-edged axes, terrible in war; 1015
 The single, he whose shaft divides the cord."
 He said; experienced Merion took the word;
 And skilful Teucer: in the helm they threw
 Their lots inscribed, and forth the latter flew.
 Swift from the string the sounding arrow flies; 1020
 But flies unblest! No grateful sacrifice,
 No firstling lambs, unheedful! didst thou vow
 To Phœbus, patron of the shaft and bow.
 For this, thy well-aim'd arrow turn'd aside,
 Err'd from the dove, yet cut the cord that tied: 1025
 Adown the mainmast fell the parted string,
 And the free bird to heaven displays her wing:
 Seas, shores, and skies, with loud applause resound,
 And Merion eager meditates the wound:
 He takes the bow, directs the shaft above, 1030
 And, following with his eye the soaring dove.

Implores the god to speed it through the skies,
With vows of firstling lambs, and grateful sacrifice.
The dove in airy circles as she wheels,
Amid the clouds the piercing arrow feels: 1035
Quite through and through the point its passage
found,

And at his feet fell bloody to the ground.
The wounded bird, ere yet she breathed her last,
With flagging wings alighted on the mast;
A moment hung, and spread her pinions there, 1040
Then sudden dropp'd, and left her life in air.
From the pleased crowd new peals of thunder rise,
And to the ships brave Merion bears the prize.

To close the funeral games, Achilles last
A massy spear amid the circle placed, 1045
And ample charger of unsullied frame,
With flowers high wrought, not blacken'd yet by
flame.

For these he bids the heroes prove their art,
Whose dext'rous skill directs the flying dart.
Here too great Merion hopes the noble prize; 1050
Nor here disdain'd the king of men to rise.
With joy Pelides saw the honour paid,
Rose to the monarch, and respectful said:

“Thee, first in virtue, as in power supreme,
Oh king of nations! all thy Greeks proclaim; 1055
In every martial game thy worth attest,
And know thee both their greatest and their best.
Take then the prize, but let brave Merion bear
This beamy javelin in thy brother's war.”

Pleased from the hero's lips his praise to hear,
The king to Merion gives the brazen spear: 1061
But, set apart for sacred use, commands
The glittering charger to Talthybius' hands.

BOOK XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

The Redemption of the Body of Hector.

THE gods deliberate about the redemption of Hector's body—Jupiter sends Thetis to Achilles to dispose him for the restoring of it ; and Iris to Priam, to encourage him to go in person, and treat for it—The old king, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his queen, makes ready for the journey, to which he is encouraged by an omen from Jupiter—He sets forth in his chariot, with a wagon loaded with presents, under the charge of Idæus, the herald—Mercury descends in the shape of a young man, and conducts him to the pavilion of Achilles—Their conversation on the way—Priam finds Achilles at his table, casts himself at his feet, and begs for the body of his son ; Achilles, moved with compassion, grants his request, detains him one night in his tent, and the next morning sends him home with the body : the Trojans run out to meet him—The lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen, with the solemnities of the funeral.—[The time of twelve days is employed in this book, while the body of Hector lies in the tent of Achilles ; and as many more are spent in the truce allowed for his interment. The scene is partly in Achilles' camp, and partly in Troy.]

Now from the finish'd games the Grecian band
Seek their black ships, and clear the crowded strand :
All stretch'd at ease the genial banquet share,
And pleasing slumbers quiet all their care.
Not so Achilles ; he to grief resign'd, 5
His friend's dear image present to his mind,
Takes his sad couch, more unobserved to weep,
Nor tastes the gifts of all-composing sleep.

Restless he roll'd around his weary bed,
 And all his soul on his Patroclus fed : 10
 The form so pleasing and the heart so kind,
 That youthful vigour, and that manly mind,
 What toils they shared, what martial works they
 wrought,
 What seas they measured, and what fields they
 fought:
 All pass'd before him in remembrance dear, 15
 Thought follows thought, and tear succeeds to tear.
 And now supine, now prone, the hero lay,
 Now shifts his side, impatient for the day;
 Then starting up, disconsolate he goes
 Wide on the lonely beach to vent his woes. 20
 There, as the solitary mourner raves,
 The ruddy morning rises o'er the waves :
 Soon as it rose, his furious steeds he join'd :
 The chariot flies, and Hector trails behind.
 And thrice, Patroclus ! round thy monument 25
 Was Hector dragg'd, then hurried to the tent.
 There sleep at last o'ercomes the hero's eyes ;
 While foul in dust the unhonour'd carcass lies,
 But not deserted by the pitying skies :
 For Phœbus watch'd it with superior care, 30
 Preserved from gaping wounds and tainting air ;
 And ignominious as it swept the field,
 Spread o'er the sacred corse his golden shield.
 All heaven was moved, and Hermes will'd to go
 By stealth to snatch him from the insulting foe : 35
 But Neptune this, and Pallas this denies,
 And the unrelenting empress of the skies :
 E'er since that day implacable to Troy,
 What time young Paris, simple shepherd boy,
 Won by destructive lust (reward obscene) 40
 Their charms rejected for the Cyprian queen.
 But when the tenth celestial morning broke,
 To heaven assembled thus Apollo spoke :
 " Unpitying powers ! how oft each holy fane
 Has Hector tinged with blood of victims slain ! 45

And can ye still his cold remains pursue ?
Still grudge his body to the 'Trojans' view ?
Deny to consort, mother, son, and sire,
The last sad honours of a funeral fire !
Is then the dire Achilles all your care ? 50
That iron heart, inflexibly severe ;
A lion, not a man, who slaughters wide
In strength of rage and impotence of pride ;
Who hastes to murder with a savage joy,
Invades around, and breathes but to destroy. 55
Shame is not of his soul ; nor understood,
The greatest evil, and the greatest good.
Still for one loss he rages unresign'd,
Repugnant to the lot of all mankind ;
To lose a friend, a brother, or a son, 60
Heaven dooms each mortal, and its will is done :
A while they sorrow, then dismiss their care ;
Fate gives the wound, and man is born to bear.
But this insatiate, the commission given
By fate, exceeds, and tempts the wrath of Heaven :
Lo, how his rage dishonest drags along 66
Hector's dead earth, insensible of wrong !
Brave though he be, yet by no reason awed,
He violates the laws of man and God."

" If equal honours by the partial skies 70
Are doom'd both heroes," Juno thus replies,
" If Thetis' son must no distinction know,
Then hear, ye gods ! the patron of the bow.
But Hector only boasts a mortal claim,
His birth deriving from a mortal dame : 75
Achilles, of your own ethereal race,
Springs from a goddess by a man's embrace—
(A goddess by ourself to Peleus given,
A man divine, and chosen friend of Heaven.)
To grace those nuptials from the bright abode, 80
Yourselves were present ; where this minstrel god
(Well pleased to share the feast) amid the choir
Stood round to hymn, and tune his youthful lyre."

Then thus the Thunderer checks the imperial dame:
 "Let not thy wrath the court of heaven inflame; 85
 Their merits nor their honours are the same.
 But mine, and every god's peculiar grace,
 Hector deserves of all the Trojan race:
 Still on our shrines his grateful offerings lay;
 (The only honours men to gods can pay;) 90
 Nor ever from our smoking altar ceased
 The pure libation and the holy feast.
 Howe'er by stealth to snatch the corse away,
 We will not: Thetis guards it night and day.
 But haste and summon to our courts above 95
 The azure queen: let her persuasion move
 Her furious son from Priam to receive
 The proffer'd ransom, and the corse to leave."

He added not: and Iris from the skies,
 Swift as a whirlwind, on the message flies, 100
 Meteorous the face of ocean sweeps,
 Refulgent gliding o'er the sable deeps.
 Between where Samos wide his forests spreads,
 And rocky Imbrus lifts its pointed heads, 104
 Down plunged the maid; (the parted waves resound;)
 She plunged, and instant shot the dark profound.
 As bearing death in the fallacious bait,
 From the bent angle sinks the leaden weight;
 So pass'd the goddess through the closing wave,
 Where Thetis sorrow'd in her sacred cave: 110
 There placed amid her melancholy train,
 (The blue-hair'd sisters of the sacred main,)
 Pensive she sat, revolving fates to come,
 And wept her godlike son's approaching doom.

Then thus the goddess of the painted bow: 115
 "Arise, oh Thetis! from thy seats below;
 'Tis Jove that calls." "And why," the dame replies,
 "Calls Jove his Thetis to the hated skies?
 Sad object as I am for heavenly sight!
 Ah, may my sorrows ever shun the light! 120
 Howe'er, be heaven's almighty sire obey'd."
 She spake, and veil'd her head in sable shade,

Which flowing long, her graceful person clad;
And forth she paced majestically sad.

Then through the world of waters they repair 125
(The way fair Iris led) to upper air.

The deeps dividing, o'er the coast they rise,
And touch with momentary flight the skies.
'There in the lightning's blaze the sire they found,
And all the gods in shining synod round. 130

Thetis approach'd with anguish in her face,
(Minerva rising, gave the mourner place,)
Ev'n Juno sought her sorrows to console,
And offer'd from her hand the nectar bowl:
She tasted, and resign'd it: then began 135
The sacred sire of gods and mortal man:

"Thou comest, fair Thetis, but with grief o'ercast;
Maternal sorrows; long, ah long to last!

Suffice, we know and we partake thy cares:
But yield to fate, and hear what Jove declares. 140

Nine days are pass'd, since all the court above
In Hector's cause have moved the ear of Jove;

'Twas voted, Hermes from his godlike foe
By stealth should bear him, but we will'd not so:
We will, thy son himself the corse restore, 145
And to his conquest add this glory more.

Then hie thee to him, and our mandate bear;
Tell him he tempts the wrath of Heaven too far:
Nor let him more (our anger if he dread)

Vent his mad vengeance on the sacred dead: 150
But yield to ransom and the father's prayer.

The mournful father Iris shall prepare
With gifts to sue, and offer to his hands
Whate'er his honour asks or heart demands."

His word the silver-footed queen attends, 155
And from Olympus' snowy tops descends.

Arrived, she heard the voice of loud lament,
And echoing groans that shook the lofty tent.

His friends prepare the victim, and dispose
Repast unheeded, while he vents his woes: 160

The goddess seats her by her pensive son,
She press'd his hand, and tender thus begun:

How long, unhappy ! shall thy sorrows flow :
 And thy heart waste with life-consuming wo :
 Mindless of food, or love, whose pleasing reign 165
 Soothes weary life, and softens human pain ?
 Oh snatch the moments yet within thy power ;
 Not long to live, indulge the amorous hour !
 Lo ! Jove himself (for Jove's command I bear)
 Forbids to tempt the wrath of Heaven too far. 170
 No longer then (his fury if thou dread)
 Detain the relics of great Hector dead ;
 Nor vent on senseless earth thy vengeance vain .
 But yield to ransom, and restore the slain."

To whom Achilles : " Be the ransom given, 175
 And we submit, since such the will of Heaven."

While thus they communed, from the Olympian
 bowers

Jove orders Iris to the Trojan towers.
 " Haste, winged goddess ! to the sacred town,
 And urge her monarch to redeem his son ; 180
 Alone the Ilian ramparts let him leave,
 And bear what stern Achilles may receive ;
 Alone, for so we will : no Trojan near ;
 Except, to place the dead with decent care,
 Some aged herald, who with gentle hand 185
 May the slow mules and funeral car command.
 Nor let him death, nor let him danger dread,
 Safe through the foe by our protection led :
 Him Hermes to Achilles shall convey,
 Guard of his life and partner of his way. 190
 Fierce as he is, Achilles' self shall spare
 His age, nor touch one venerable hair :
 Some thought there must be in a soul so brave,
 Some sense of duty, some desire to save."

Then down her bow the winged Iris drives, 195
 And swift at Priam's mournful court arrives ;
 Where the sad sons beside their father's throne
 Sat bathed in tears, and answer'd groan with groan.
 And all amid them lay the hoary sire ;
 Sad scene of wo ! his face his wrapp'd attire 200

Conceal'd from sight; with frantic hands he spread
A shower of ashes o'er his neck and head.
From room to room his pensive daughters roam;
Whose shrieks and clamours fill the vaulted dome:
Mindful of those who, late their pride and joy, 205
Lie pale and breathless round the fields of Troy!
Before the king Jove's messenger appears,
And thus in whispers greets his trembling ears:

“Fear not, oh father! no ill news I bear;
From Jove I come, Jove makes thee still his care:
For Hector's sake these walls he bids thee leave, 211
And bear what stern Achilles may receive:
Alone, for so he wills: no Trojan near;
Except, to place the dead with decent care,
Some aged herald, who with gentle hand 215
May the slow mules and funeral car command.
Nor shalt thou death, nor shalt thou danger dread;
Safe through the foe by his protection led:
Thee Hermes to Pelides shall convey,
Guard of thy life and partner of thy way. 220
Fierce as he is, Achilles' self shall spare
Thy age, nor touch one venerable hair;
Some thought there must be in a soul so brave,
Some sense of duty, some desire to save.”

She spoke, and vanish'd. Priam bids prepare 225
His gentle mules, and harness to the car;
There, for the gifts, a polish'd casket lay;
His pious sons the king's command obey.
Then pass'd the monarch to his bridalroom,
Where cedar beams the lofty roofs perfume, 230
And where the treasures of his empire lay;
Then call'd his queen, and thus began to say.

“Unhappy consort of a king distress'd!
Partake the troubles of thy husband's breast:
I saw descend the messenger of Jove, 235
Who bids me try Achilles' mind to move;
Forsake these ramparts, and with gifts obtain
The corse of Hector, at yon navy slain.

Tell me thy thought : my heart impels to go
Through hostile camps, and bears me to the foe."

The hoary monarch thus : her piercing cries 241
Sad Hecuba renews, and then replies :

" Ah ! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind ?
And where the prudence now that awed mankind ?
Through Phrygia once, and foreign regions known ;
Now all confused, distracted, overthrown ! 246

Singly to pass through hosts of foes ! to face
(Oh heart of steel !) the murderer of thy race !
To view that deathful eye, and wander o'er
Those hands, yet red with Hector's noble gore ! 250

Alas, my lord ! he knows not how to spare,
And what his mercy, thy slain sons declare ;
So brave ! so many fall'n ! To calm his rage
Vain were thy dignity, and vain thy age.

No ; pent in this sad palace, let us give 255
To grief the wretched days we have to live.

Still, still for Hector let our sorrows flow,
Born to his own and to his parents' wo !
Doom'd from the hour his luckless life begun,
To dogs, to vultures, and to Peleus' son ! 260

Oh ! in his dearest blood might I allay
My rage, and these barbarities repay !
For ah ! could Hector merit thus, whose breath
Expired not meanly in inactive death ?
He pour'd his latest blood in manly fight, 265
And fell a hero in his country's right."

" Seek not to stay me, nor my soul affright
With words of omen, like a bird of night,"
Replied unmoved the venerable man ;

" 'Tis Heaven commands me, and you urge in vain.
Had any mortal voice the injunction laid, 271
Nor augur, priest, nor seer, had been obey'd.

A present goddess brought the high command ;
I saw, I heard her, and the word shall stand.
I go, ye gods ! obedient to your call : 275

If in yon camp your powers have doom'd my fall,

Content : by the same hand let me expire !
Add to the slaughter'd son the wretched sire !
One cold embrace at least may be allow'd, 279
And my last tears flow mingled with his blood !"

From forth his open'd stores, this said, he drew
Twelve costly carpets of refulgent hue ;
As many vests, as many mantles told,
And twelve fair veils, and garments stiff with gold.
Two tripods next, and twice two chargers shine,
With ten pure talents from the richest mine ; 286
And last a large well-labour'd bowl had place,
(The pledge of treaties once with friendly Thrace,)
Seem'd all too mean the stores he could employ,
For one last look to buy him back to Troy ! 290

Lo ! the sad father, frantic with his pain,
Around him furious drives his menial train :
In vain each slave with duteous care attends ;
Each office hurts him, and each face offends.
" What make ye here, officious crowds ?" he cries.
" Hence ! nor obtrude your anguish on my eyes. 296
Have ye no griefs at home, to fix you there ?
Am I the only object of despair ?
Am I become my people's common show,
Set up by Jove your spectacle of wo ? 300
No, you must feel him too ; yourselves must fall ;
The same stern god to ruin gives you all :
Nor is great Hector lost by me alone ;
Your sole defence, your guardian power, is gone !
I see your blood the fields of Phrygia drown, 305
I see the ruins of your smoking town !
Oh send me, gods ! ere that sad day shall come,
A willing ghost to Pluto's dreary dome !"

He said, and feebly drives his friends away :
The sorrowing friends his frantic rage obey. 310
Next on his sons his erring fury falls,
Polites, Paris, Agathon, he calls ;
His threats Deiphobus and Dius hear,
Hippothous, Pammon, Helenus the seer,

And generous Antiphon : for yet these nine 315
Survived, sad relics of his numerous line.

“ Inglorious sons of an unhappy sire !
Why did not all in Hector’s cause expire ?
Wretch that I am ! my bravest offspring slain,
You, the disgrace of Priam’s house, remain ! 320
Mestor the brave, renown’d in ranks of war,
With ‘Troilus, dreadful on his rushing car,
And last great Hector, more than man divine,
For sure he seem’d not of terrestrial line !
All those relentless Mars untimely slew, 325
And left me these, a soft and servile crew,
Whose days the feast and wanton dance employ,
Gluttons and flatterers, the contempt of ‘Troy !
Why teach ye not my rapid wheels to run,
And speed my journey to redeem my son ?” 330

The sons their father’s wretched age revere,
Forgive his anger, and produce the car.
High on the seat the cabinet they bind :
The new-made car with solid beauty shined ;
Box was the yoke, emboss’d with costly pains, 335
And hung with ringlets to receive the reins ;
Nine cubits long, the traces swept the ground ;
These to the chariot’s polish’d pole they bound,
Then fix’d a ring the running reins to guide,
And close beneath the gathered ends were tied. 340
Next with the gifts (the price of Hector slain)
The sad attendants load the groaning wain :
Last to the yoke the well-match’d mules they bring :
(The gift of Mysia to the Trojan king.)
But the fair horses, long his darling care, 345
Himself received, and harness’d to his car :
Grieved as he was, he not this task denied ;
The hoary herald help’d him at his side.
While careful these the gentle coursers join’d,
Sad Hecuba approach’d with anxious mind ; 350
A golden bowl that foam’d with fragrant wine
(Libation destined to the power divine)

Held in her right, before the steeds she stands,
And thus consigns it to the monarch's hands :

“Take this, and pour to Jove; that, safe from
harms, 355

His grace restore thee to our roof and arms.
Since victor of thy fears, and slighting mine,
Heaven or thy soul inspire this bold design :
Pray to that god, who high on Ida's brow
Surveys thy desolated realms below, 360
His winged messenger to send from high,
And lead thy way with heavenly augury :
Let the strong sovereign of the plummy race
Tower on the right of yon ethereal space.
That sign beheld, and strengthen'd from above, 365
Boldly pursue the journey mark'd by Jove ;
But if the god his augury denies,
Suppress thy impulse, nor reject advice.”

“’Tis just,” said Priam, “to the sire above
To raise our hands ; for who so good as Jove !” 370

He spoke, and bade the attendant handmaid bring
The purest water of the living spring ;
(Her ready hands the ewer and basin held ;)
Then took the golden cup his queen had fill'd ;
On the mid pavement pours the rosy wine, 375
Uplifts his eyes, and calls the power divine :

“Oh first, and greatest ! heaven's imperial lord !
On lofty Ida's holy hill adored !

To stern Achilles now direct my ways,
And teach him mercy when a father prays. 380
If such thy will, despatch from yonder sky
Thy sacred bird, celestial augury !

Let the strong sovereign of the plummy race
Tower on the right of yon ethereal space :
So shall thy suppliant, strengthen'd from above, 385
Fearless pursue the journey mark'd by Jove.”

Jove heard his prayer, and from the throne on
high
Despatch'd his bird, celestial augury !

The swift-wing'd chaser of the feather'd game,
And known to gods by Percnos' lofty name. 390
Wide as appears some palace gate display'd,
So broad, his pinions stretch'd their ample shade,
As stooping dexter with resounding wings
The imperial bird descends in airy rings.
A dawn of joy in every face appears; 395
The mourning matron dries her timorous tears:
Swift on his car the impatient monarch sprung;
The brazen portal in his passage rung.
The mules preceding draw the loaded wain,
Charged with the gifts: Ideus holds the rein: 400
The king himself his gentle steeds controls,
And through surrounding friends the chariot rolls.
On his slow wheels the following people wait,
Mourn at each step, and give him up to fate;
With hands uplifted, eye him as he pass'd, 405
And gaze upon him as they gazed their last.
Now forward fares the father on his way,
Through the lone fields, and back to Ilion they.
Great Jove beheld him as he cross'd the plain,
And felt the woes of miserable man: 410
Then thus to Hermes: "Thou whose constant cares
Still succour mortals, and attend their prayers;
Behold an object to thy charge consign'd:
If ever pity touch'd thee for mankind,
Go, guard the sire: the observing foe prevent, 415
And safe conduct him to Achilles' tent."

The god obeys, his golden pinions binds,
And mounts incumbent on the wings of winds,
That high, through fields of air, his flight sustain,
O'er the wide earth and o'er the boundless main:
Then grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 421
Or in soft slumbers seals the wakeful eye;
Thus arm'd, swift Hermes steers his airy way,
And stoops on Hellespont's resounding sea.
A beauteous youth, majestic, and divine, 425
He seem'd: fair offspring of some princely line!

Now twilight veil'd the glaring face of day,
And clad the dusky fields in sober gray ;
What time the herald and the hoary king
(Their chariots stopping at the silver spring, 430
That circling Ilus' ancient marble flows)

Allow'd the mules and steeds a short repose.
Through the dim shade the herald first espies
A man's approach, and thus to Priam cries :
" I mark some foe's advance : oh king ! beware ; 435
This hard adventure claims thy utmost care :
For much I fear destruction hovers nigh ;
Our state asks counsel. Is it best to fly ?
Or, old and helpless, at his feet to fall,
Two wretched suppliants, and for mercy call ?" 440

The afflicted monarch shiver'd with despair ;
Pale grew his face, and upright stood his hair ;
Sunk was his heart : his colour went and came ;
A sudden trembling shook his aged frame :
When Hermes greeting, touch'd his royal hand, 445
And gently thus accosts with kind demand :

" Say whither, father, when each mortal sight
Is seal'd in sleep, thou wander'st through the night ?
Why roam thy mules and steeds the plain along,
Through Grecian foes, so numerous and so strong ?
What couldst thou hope, should these thy treasures
view ; 451

These, who with endless hate thy race pursue ?
For what defence, alas ! couldst thou provide ;
Thyself not young, a weak old man thy guide ?
Yet suffer not thy soul to sink with dread : 455
From me no harm shall touch thy reverend head ;
From Greece I'll guard thee too ; for in those lines
The living image of my father shines."

" Thy words, that speak benevolence of mind,
Are true, my son !" the godlike sire rejoin'd : 460
" Great are my hazards ; but the gods survey
My steps, and send thee, guardian of my way.
Hail, and be bless'd ! Forscarce of mortal kind
Appear thy form, thy feature, and thy mind."

“Nor true are all thy words, nor erring wide,” 465
The sacred messenger of heaven replied.

“But say, convey’st thou through the lonely plains
What yet most precious of thy store remains,
To lodge in safety with some friendly hand ;
Prepared, perchance, to leave thy native land ? 470
Or fly’st thou now ? What hopes can Troy retain,
Thy matchless son, her guard and glory, slain ?”

The king, alarm’d : “Say what, and whence thou
art,

Who search the sorrows of a parent’s heart,
And know so well how godlike Hector died ?” 475
Thus Priam spoke, and Hermes thus replied :

“You tempt me, father, and with pity touch :
On this sad subject you inquire too much.
Oft have these eyes that godlike Hector view’d
In glorious fight, with Grecian blood imbrued ; 480
I saw him when, like Jove, his flames he toss’d
On thousand ships, and wither’d half a host ;
I saw, but help’d not ; stern Achilles’ ire
Forbade assistance, and enjoy’d the fire.
For him I serve, of Myrmidonian race ; 485
One ship convey’d us from our native place ;
Polyctor is my sire, an honour’d name,
Old like thyself, and not unknown to fame :
Of seven his sons, by whom the lot was cast
To serve our prince, it fell on me, the last. 490
To watch this quarter my adventure falls :
For with the morn the Greeks attack your walls ;
Sleepless they sit, impatient to engage,
And scarce their rulers check the martial rage.”

“If then thou art of stern Pelides’ train,” 495
The mournful monarch thus rejoin’d again,
“Ah, tell me truly, where, oh where are laid
My son’s dear relics ? what befalls him dead ?
Have dogs dismember’d on the naked plains,
Or yet unmangled rest his cold remains ?” 500

“Oh favour’d of the skies !” thus answer’d then
The power that mediates ’tween gods and men,

“Nor dogs nor vultures have thy Hector rent,
But whole he lies, neglected in the tent :
This the twelfth evening since he rested there, 505
Untouch’d by worms, untainted by the air.
Still as Aurora’s ruddy beam is spread,
Round his friend’s tomb Achilles drags the dead :
Yet undisfigured or in limb or face,
All fresh he lies, with every living grace, 510
Majestical in death ! No stains are found
O’er all the corse, and closed is every wound ;
Though many a wound they gave. Some heavenly
care,

Some hand divine, preserves him ever fair :
Or all the host of heaven, to whom he led 515
A life so grateful, still regard him dead.”

Thus spoke to Priam the celestial guide,
And joyful thus the royal sire replied :
“Bless’d is the man who pays the gods above
The constant tribute of respect and love ; 520
Those who inhabit the Olympian bower
My son forgot not, in exalted power ;
And Heaven, that every virtue bears in mind,
Ev’n to the ashes of the just is kind.
But thou, oh generous youth ! this goblet take, 525
A pledge of gratitude, for Hector’s sake ;
And while the favouring gods our steps survey,
Safe to Pelides’ tent conduct my way.”

To whom the latent god : “Oh king ! forbear
To tempt my youth, for apt is youth to err : 530
But can I, absent from my prince’s sight,
Take gifts in secret that must shun the light ?
What from our master’s interest thus we draw,
Is but a licensed theft that ’scapes the law.
Respecting him, my soul abjures the offence ; 535
And as the crime, I dread the consequence.
Thee, far as Argos, pleased I could convey,
Guard of thy life and partner of thy way ;
On thee attend, thy safety to maintain,
O’er pathless forests or the roaring main.” 540

He said, then took the chariot at a bound,
And snatch'd the reins, and whirl'd the lash around :
Before the inspiring god that urged them on,
The coursers fly with spirit not their own.
And now they reach'd the naval walls, and found 545
The guards repasting, while the bowls go round :
On these the virtue of his wand he tries,
And pours deep slumber on their watchful eyes :
Then heaved the massy gates, removed the bars,
And o'er the trenches led the rolling cars. 550
Unseen, through all the hostile camp they went,
And now approach'd Pelides' lofty tent.
Of fir the roof was raised, and cover'd o'er
With reeds collected from the marshy shore ;
And, fenced with palisades, a hall of state 555
(The work of soldiers) where the hero sat.
Large was the door, whose well-compacted strength
A solid pine tree barr'd of wondrous length ;
Scarce three strong Greeks could lift its mighty
weight,
But great Achilles singly closed the gate. 560
This Hermes (such the power of gods) set wide ;
Then swift alighted the celestial guide,
And thus, reveal'd : " Hear, prince ! and understand
Thou owest thy guidance to no mortal hand ;
Hermes I am, descended from above, 565
The king of arts, the messenger of Jove.
Farewell : to shun Achilles' sight I fly :
Uncommon are such favours of the sky,
Nor stand confess'd to frail mortality.
Now fearless enter, and prefer thy prayers ; 570
Adjure him by his father's silver hairs,
His son, his mother ! urge him to bestow
Whatever pity that stern heart can know."
Thus having said, he vanish'd from his eyes,
And in a moment shot into the skies : 575
The king, confirm'd from heaven, alighted there,
And left his aged herald on the car.

With solemn pace through various rooms he went,
And found Achilles in his inner tent :
There sat the hero ; Alcimus the brave, 580
And great Automedon, attendance gave :
These served his person at the royal feast :
Around, at awful distance, stood the rest.

Unseen by these, the king his entry made ;
And, prostrate now before Achilles laid, 585
Sudden (a venerable sight) appears ;
Embraced his knees, and bathed his hands in tears ;
Those direful hands his kisses press'd, imbrued
Ev'n with the best, the dearest of his blood !

As when a wretch (who, conscious of his crime,
Pursued for murder, flies his native clime) 591
Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale, amazed !
All gaze, all wonder : thus Achilles gazed :
Thus stood the attendants, stupid with surprise ;
All mute, yet seem to question with their eyes ;
Each look'd on other, none the silence broke, 596
Till thus at last the kingly suppliant spoke :

“Ah think, thou favour'd of the powers divine !
Think of thy father's age, and pity mine !
In me thy father's reverend image trace,
Those silver hairs, that venerable face ;
His trembling limbs, his helpless person, see !
In all my equal, but in misery !
Yet now, perhaps, some turn of human fate
Expels him helpless from his peaceful state ; 605
Think, from some powerful foe thou see'st him fly,
And beg protection with a feeble cry.
Yet still one comfort in his soul may rise ;
He hears his son still lives to glad his eyes ;
And hearing, still may hope a better day 610
May send him thee, to chase that foe away.
No comfort to my griefs, no hopes remain,
The best, the bravest of my sons are slain !
Yet what a race, ere Greece to Ilion came,
The pledge of many a loved and loving dame ! 615

Nineteen one mother bore! Dead, all are dead!
How oft, alas! has wretched Priam bled!
Still one was left, their loss to recompense;
His father's hope, his country's last defence.
Him too thy rage has slain! beneath thy steel 620
Unhappy in his country's cause he fell!
For him, through hostile camps I bend my way,
For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay;
Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear;
Oh hear the wretched, and the gods revere! 625
Think of thy father, and this face behold!
See him in me, as helpless and as old,
Though not so wretched: there he yields to me,
The first of men in sovereign misery!
Thus forced to kneel, thus grovelling to embrace 630
The scourge and ruin of my realm and race;
Suppliant my children's murderer to implore,
And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore!"

These words soft pity in the chief inspire,
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of his sire. 635
Then with his hand (as prostrate still he lay)
The old man's cheek he gently turn'd away.
Now each by turns indulged the gush of wo;
And now the mingled tides together flow;
This low on earth, that gently bending o'er, 640
A father one, and one a son deplore:
But great Achilles different passions rend,
And now his sire he mourns, and now his friend.
The infectious softness through the heroes ran;
One universal solemn shower began: 645
They bore as heroes, but they felt as man.

Satiate at length with unavailing woes,
From the high throne divine Achilles rose;
The reverend monarch by the hand he raised;
On his white beard and form majestic gazed, 650
Not unrelenting; then serene began
With words to soothe the miserable man.

"Alas, what weight of anguish hast thou known!
Unhappy prince! thus guardless and alone

To pass through foes, and thus undaunted face 655
The man whose fury has destroy'd thy race!
Heaven sure has arm'd thee with a heart of steel,
A strength proportion'd to the woes you feel.
Rise then: let reason mitigate your care;
To mourn avails not; man is born to bear. 660
Such is, alas! the gods' severe decree;
They, only they, are bless'd, and only free.
Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,
The source of evil one, and one of good:
From these the cup of mortal man he fills, 665
Blessings to these, to those distributes ill;
To most, he mingles both. The wretch decreed
To taste the bad, unmix'd, is cursed indeed;
Pursued by wrongs, by meager famine driven,
He wanders, outcast both of earth and heaven. 670
The happiest taste not happiness sincere,
But find the cordial draught is dash'd with care.
Who more than Peleus shone in wealth and power!
What stars concurring bless'd his natal hour!
A realm, a goddess to his wishes given; 675
Graced by the gods with all the gifts of heaven:
One evil, yet, o'ertakes his latest day;
No race succeeding to imperial sway:
An only son; and he, alas! ordain'd
To fall untimely in a foreign land. 680
See him, in Troy, the pious care decline
Of his weak age, to live the curse of thine!
Thou too, old man, hast happier days beheld;
In riches once, in children once excell'd;
Extended Phrygia own'd thy ample reign, 685
And all fair Lesbos' blissful seats contain,
And all wide Hellespont's unmeasured main.
But since the god his hand has pleased to turn,
And fill thy measures from his bitter urn,
What sees the sun, but hapless heroes' falls? 690
War and the blood of men surround thy walls!
What must be, must be. Bear thy lot, nor shed
These unavailing sorrows o'er the dead;

Thou canst not call him from the Stygian shore,
But thou, alas, mayst live to suffer more!" 695

To whom the king: "Oh, favour'd of the skies!
Here let me grow to earth! since Hector lies
On the bare beach deprived of obsequies.
Oh, give me Hector! to my eyes restore
His corse, and take the gifts: I ask no more. 700
Thou, as thou mayst, these boundless stores enjoy;
Safe mayst thou sail, and turn thy wrath from Troy;
So shall thy pity and forbearance give
A weak old man to see the light and live!"

"Move me no more," Achilles thus replies, 705
While kindling anger sparkled in his eyes;
"Nor seek by tears my steady soul to bend;
To yield thy Hector I myself intend:
For know, from Jove my goddess mother came;
(Old Ocean's daughter, silver-footed dame;) 710
Nor comest thou but by heaven; nor comest alone,
Some god impels with courage not thy own:
No human hand the weighty gates unbarr'd,
Nor could the boldest of our youth have dared
To pass our outworks, or elude the guard. 715
Cease; lest, neglectful of high Jove's command,
I show thee, king, thou tread'st on hostile land;
Release my knees, thy suppliant arts give o'er,
And shake the purpose of my soul no more."

The sire obey'd him, trembling and o'erawed. 720
Achilles, like a lion, rush'd abroad;
Automedon and Alcimus attend;
(Whom most he honour'd since he lost his friend;)
These to unyoke the mules and horses went,
And led the hoary herald to the tent; 725
Next heap'd on high the numerous presents bear
(Great Hector's ransom) from the polish'd car.
Two splendid mantles, and a carpet spread,
They leave to cover and enwrap the dead.
Then call the handmaids, with assistant toil 730
To wash the body, and anoint with oil,

Apart from Priam ; lest the unhappy sire,
Provoked to passion, once more rouse to ire
The stern Pelides ; and nor sacred age, 734
Nor Jove's command, should check the rising rage.
This done, the garments o'er the corse they spread :
Achilles lifts it to the funeral bed ;
Then, while the body on the car they laid,
He groans, and calls on loved Patroclus' shade :

“ If, in that gloom which never light must know.
The deeds of mortals touch the ghosts below ;
Oh friend ! forgive me, that I thus fulfil
(Restoring Hector) Heaven's unquestion'd will.
The gifts the father gave, be ever thine,
To grace thy manes, and adorn thy shrine.” 745

He said, and, entering, took his seat of state,
Where full before him reverend Priam sat :
To whom, composed, the godlike chief begun :
“ Lo ! to thy prayer restored, thy breathless son ;
Extended on the funeral couch he lies ; 750
And soon as morning paints the eastern skies,
The sight is granted to thy longing eyes.
But now the peaceful hours of sacred night
Demand refection, and to rest invite ;
Nor thou, oh father ! thus consumed with wo, 755
The common cares that nourish life forego.
Not thus did Niobe, of form divine,
A parent once, whose sorrows equal'd thine :
Six youthful sons, as many blooming maids,
In one sad day beheld the Stygian shades ; 760
These by Apollo's silver bow were slain,
Those, Cynthia's arrows stretch'd upon the plain :
So was her pride chastised by wrath divine,
Who match'd her own with bright Latona's line ;
But two the goddess, twelve the queen enjoy'd ; 765
Those boasted twelve the avenging two destroy'd.
Steep'd in their blood, and in the dust outspread,
Nine days, neglected, lay exposed the dead :
None by to weep them, to inhumate them none ;
(For Jove had turn'd the nation all to stone ;) 770

The gods themselves at length, relenting, gave
 The unhappy race the honours of a grave.
 Herself a rock, (for such was Heaven's high will,)
 Through deserts wild now pours a weeping rill;
 There round the bed whence Achelous springs, 775
 The watery fairies dance in mazy rings,
 There high on Sipylus's shaggy brow
 She stands, her own sad monument of wo;
 The rock for ever lasts, the tears for ever flow.

“Such griefs, oh king! have other parents known:
 Remember theirs, and mitigate thy own. 781
 The care of Heaven thy Hector has appear'd,
 Nor shall he lie unwept and uninterr'd;
 Soon may thy aged cheeks in tears be drown'd,
 And all the eyes of Ilion stream around.” 785

He said; and, rising, chose the victim ewe
 With silver fleece, which his attendants slew.
 The limbs they sever from the reeking hide,
 With skill prepare them, and in parts divide:
 Each on the coals the separate morsels lays, 790
 And, hasty, snatches from the rising blaze.
 With bread the glittering canisters they load,
 Which round the board Automedon bestow'd:
 The chief himself to each his portion placed,
 And each indulging shared in sweet repast. 795
 When now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
 The wondering hero eyes his royal guest;
 No less the royal guest the hero eyes,
 His godlike aspect and majestic size:
 Here, youthful grace and noble fire engage; 800
 And there, the mild benevolence of age.

Thus gazing long, the silence neither broke;
 (A solemn scene!) at length the father spoke:
 “Permit me now, beloved of Jove! to steep
 My careful temples in the dew of sleep: 805
 For, since the day that number'd with the dead
 My hapless son, the dust has been my bed;
 Soft sleep a stranger to my weeping eyes;
 My only food, my sorrows and my sighs;

Till now, encouraged by the grace you give, 810
I share thy banquet, and consent to live."

With that, Achilles bade prepare the bed,
With purple soft, and shaggy carpets spread;
Forth, by the flaming lights, they bend their way,
And place the couches, and the coverings lay. 815
Then he: "Now, father, sleep, but sleep not here;
Consult thy safety, and forgive my fear;
Lest any Argive, (at this hour awake,
To ask our counsel, or our orders take,) 820
Approaching sudden to our open'd tent,
Perchance behold thee, and our grace prevent.
Should such report thy honour'd person here,
The king of men the ransom might defer;
But say with speed, if aught of thy desire
Remains unask'd; what time the rites require 825
To inter thy Hector? For, so long we stay
Our slaughtering arm, and bid the hosts obey."

"If then thy will permit," the monarch said,
"To finish all due honours to the dead,
This, of thy grace accord; to thee are known, 830
The fears of Ilion, closed within her town;
And at what distance from our walls aspire
The hills of Ide, and forests for the fire.
Nine days to vent our sorrows I request,
The tenth shall see the funeral and the feast; 835
The next to raise his monument be given;
The twelfth we war, if war be doom'd by Heaven!"

"This thy request," replied the chief, "enjoy:
Till then our arms suspend the fall of Troy."

Then gave his hand at parting, to prevent 840
The old man's fears, and turn'd within the tent;
Where fair Briseis, bright with blooming charms,
Expects her hero with desiring arms.
But in the porch the king and herald rest;
Sad dreams of care yet wand'ring in their breast. 845

Now gods and men the gifts of sleep partake;
Industrious Hermes only was awake,

The king's return revolving in his mind,
To pass the ramparts, and the watch to blind.
'The power descending hover'd o'er his head : 850
"And sleep'st thou, father?" thus the vision said ;
"Now dost thou sleep, when Hector is restored ?
Nor fear the Grecian foes, or Grecian lord ?
Thy presence here should stern Atrides see,
Thy still-surviving sons may sue for thee ; 855
May offer all thy treasures yet contain,
To spare thy age ; and offer all in vain."

Waked with the word, the trembling sire arose,
And raised his friend : the god before him goes :
He joins the mules, directs them with his hand, 860
And moves in silence through the hostile land.
When now to Xanthus' yellow stream they drove,
(Xanthus, immortal progeny of Jove,)
The winged deity forsook their view,
And in a moment to Olympus flew. 865

Now shed Aurora round her saffron ray,
Sprung through the gates of light, and gave the day :
Charged with their mournful load, to Ilion go
The sage and king, majestically slow.
Cassandra first beholds, from Ilion's spire, 870
The sad procession of her hoary sire ;
Then, as the pensive pomp advanced more near,
(Her breathless brother stretch'd upon the bier,)
A shower of tears o'erflows her beauteous eyes,
Alarming thus all Ilion with her cries : 875

"Turn here your steps, and here your eyes employ,
Ye wretched daughters, and ye sons of Troy !
If e'er ye rush'd in crowds, with vast delight,
To hail your hero glorious from the fight !
Now meet him dead, and let your sorrows flow ! 880
Your common triumph, and your common wo."

In thronging crowds they issue to the plains ;
Nor man, nor woman, in the walls remains ;
In every face the selfsame grief is shown ;
And Troy sends forth one universal groan. 885

At Scæa's gates they meet the mourning wain,
Hang on the wheels, and grovel round the slain.
The wife and mother, frantic with despair,
Kiss his pale cheek, and rend their scatter'd hair :
Thus wildly wailing at the gates they lay ; 890
And there had sigh'd and sorrow'd out the day :
But godlike Priam from the chariot rose ;
" Forbear," he cried, " this violence of woes,
First to the palace let the car proceed,
Then pour your boundless sorrows o'er the dead."

The waves of people at his word divide, 896
Slow rolls the chariot through the following tide :
Ev'n to the palace the sad pomp they wait ;
They weep, and place him on the bed of state.
A melancholy choir attend around, 900
With plaintive sighs, and music's solemn sound :
Alternately they sing, alternate flow
The obedient tears, melodious in their wo ;
While deeper sorrows groan from each full heart,
And nature speaks at every pause of art. 905

First to the corse the weeping consort flew ;
Around his neck her milk-white arms she threw,
And, " Oh, my Hector ! oh, my lord !" she cries,
" Snatch'd in thy bloom from these desiring eyes !
Thou to the dismal realms forever gone ! 910
And I abandon'd, desolate, alone !

An only son, once comfort of our pains,
Sad product now of hapless love remains !
Never to manly age that son shall rise,
Or with increasing graces glad my eyes ; 915
For Ilion now (her great defender slain)
Shall sink a smoking ruin on the plain.

Who now protects her wives with guardian care ?
Who saves her infants from the rage of war ?
Now hostile fleets must waft those infants o'er 920
(Those wives must wait them) to a foreign shore !
Thou too, my son ! to barbarous climes shalt go,
The sad companion of thy mother's wo ;

Driven hence a slave before the victor's sword ;
 Condemn'd to toil for some inhuman lord : 925
 Or else some Greek whose father press'd the plain,
 Or son, or brother, by great Hectòr slain,
 In Hector's blood his vengeance shall enjoy,
 And hurl thee headlong from the towers of 'Troy.
 For thy stern father never spared a foe : 930
 Thence all these tears, and all this scene of wo !
 Thence many evils his sad parents bore,
 His parents many, but his consort more.
 Why gavest thou not to me thy dying hand ?
 And why received not I thy last command ? 935
 Some word thou wouldst have spoke, which, sadly
 dear,

My soul might keep, or utter with a tear ;
 Which never, never could be lost in air,
 Fix'd in my heart, and oft repeated there !"

Thus to her weeping maids she makes her moan,
 Her weeping handmaids echo groan for groan. 941

The mournful mother next sustains her part :
 " Oh thou, the best, the dearest to my heart !
 Of all my race thou most by Heaven approved,
 And by the immortals ev'n in death beloved ! 945
 While all my other sons in barbarous bands
 Achilles bound, and sold to foreign lands,
 This felt no chains, but went a glorious ghost,
 Free and a hero, to the Stygian coast.
 Sentenced, 'tis true, by his inhuman doom, 950
 Thy noble corse was dragg'd around the tomb ;
 (The tomb or him thy warlike arm had slain ;)
 Ungenerous insult, impotent and vain !
 Yet glow'st thou fresh with every living grace ;
 No mark of pain of violence of face ; 955
 Rosy and fair, as Phœbus' silver bow
 Dismiss'd thee gently to the shades below !"

Thus spoke the dame, and melted into tears.
 Sad Helen next in pomp of grief appears :
 Fast from the shining sluices of her eyes 960
 Fall the round crystal drops, while thus she cries :

“ Ah, dearest friend ! in whom the gods had join'd
The mildest manners with the bravest mind ;
Now twice ten years (unhappy years) are o'er,
Since Paris brought me to the Trojan shore. 965
(Oh had I perish'd ere that form divine
Seduced this soft, this easy heart of mine !)
Yet was it ne'er my fate, from thee to find
A deed ungentle, or a word unkind :
When others cursed the authoress of their wo, 970
Thy pity check'd my sorrows in their flow :
If some proud brother eyed me with disdain,
Or scornful sister with her sweeping train,
Thy gentle accents soften'd all my pain.
For thee I mourn ; and mourn myself in thee, 975
The wretched source of all this misery !
The fate I caused forever I bemoan ;
Sad Helen has no friend, now thou art gone !
Through 'Troy's wide streets abandon'd shall I roam !
In 'Troy deserted, as abhorr'd at home !” 980

So spoke the fair, with sorrow-streaming eye :
Distressful beauty melts each stander-by ;
On all around the infectious sorrow grows ;
But Priam check'd the torrent as it rose.
“ Perform, ye 'Trojans, what the rites require, 985
And fell the forests for a funeral pyre ;
Twelve days, nor foes nor secret ambush dread ;
Achilles grants these honours to the dead.”

He spoke ; and, at his word, the 'Trojan train
Their mules and oxen harness to the wain, 990
Pour through the gates, and, fell'd from Ida's crown,
Roll back the gather'd forests to the town.
'These toils continue nine succeeding days,
And high in air a sylvan structure raise :
But when the tenth fair morn began to shine, 995
Forth to the pile was borne the man divine,
And placed aloft ; while all, with streaming eyes,
Beheld the flames and rolling smokes arise.
Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With rosy lustre streak'd the dewy lawn, 1000

Again the mournful crowds surround the pyre,
And quench with wine the yet remaining fire.
The snowy bones his friends and brothers place
(With tears collected) in a golden vase ;
The golden vase in purple palls they roll'd, 1005
Of softest texture, and inwrought with gold.
Last o'er the urn the sacred earth they spread,
And raised the tomb, memorial of the dead.
(Strong guards and spies, till all the rites were done,
Watch'd from the rising to the setting sun.) 1010
All Troy then moves to Priam's court again,
A solemn, silent, melancholy train :
Assembled there, from pious toil they rest,
And sadly shared the last sepulchral feast.
Such honours Ilion to her hero paid, 1015
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.

END OF THE ILIAD.

APPENDIX.

WE have now passed through the Iliad, and seen the anger of Achilles, and the terrible effects of it, at an end. As that only was the subject of the poem, and the nature of epic poetry would not permit our author to proceed to the event of the war, it may, perhaps, be acceptable to the common reader to give a short account of what happened to Troy and the chief actors in this poem, after the conclusion of it.

I need not mention that Troy was taken soon after the death of Hector, by the stratagem of the wooden horse, the particulars of which are described by Virgil in the second book of the *Æneid*.

Achilles fell before Troy, by the hand of Paris, by the shot of an arrow in his heel, as Hector had prophesied at his death, book xxii.

The unfortunate Priam was killed by Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles.

Ajax, after the death of Achilles, had a contest with Ulysses for the armour of Vulcan; but, being defeated in his aim, he slew himself through indignation.

Helen, after the death of Paris, married Deiphobus, his brother, and, at the taking of Troy, betrayed him, in order to reconcile herself to Menelaus, her first husband, who received her again into favour.

Agamemnon at his return was barbarously murdered by *Ægisthus*, at the instigation of Clytemnestra, his wife, who, in his absence, had dishonoured his bed with *Ægisthus*.

Diomed, after the fall of Troy, was expelled his own country, and scarce escaped with life from his adulterous wife *Egiale*; but at last was received by Daunus in Apulia, and shared his kingdom: it is uncertain how he died.

Nestor lived in peace, with his children, in Pylos, his native country.

Ulysses also, after innumerable troubles by sea and land, at last returned in safety to Ithaca, which is the subject of Homer's *Odyssey*.

ODYSSEY.

ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

Minerva's Descent to Ithaca.

THE poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions—He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the gods, assembled in council, proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country—For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas, immediately descends to Ithaca—She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentès, king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his father Ulysses to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears—The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night—Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song—Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.

THE man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercised in woes, oh muse! resound;
Who, when his arms had wrought the destined fall
Of sacred Troy, and razed her Heaven-built wall,
Wandering from clime to clime, observant stray'd, 5
Their manners noted, and their states survey'd.

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
 Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore :
 Vain toils ! their impious folly dared to prey
 On herds devoted to the god of day ; 10
 The god vindictive doom'd them never more
 (Ah, men unblest'd !) to touch that natal shore.
 Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
 Celestial muse ! and to our world relate.

Now at their native realms the Greeks arrived ;
 All who the wars of ten long years survived, 16
 And 'scaped the perils of the gulfy main.
 Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,
 Deplored his absent queen and empire lost. 20
 Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :
 In vain ; for now the circling years disclose
 The day predestined to reward his woes.
 At length his Ithaca is given by fate, 25
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait ,
 At length their rage the hostile powers restrain,
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.
 But now the god, remote, a heavenly guest,
 In Æthiopia graced the genial feast ; 30
 (A race divided, whom with sloping rays
 The rising and descending sun surveys ;)
 There on the world's extremest verge revered
 With hecatombs and prayer in pomp preferr'd,
 Distant he lay ; while in the bright abodes 35
 Of high Olympus, Jove convened the gods :
 The assembly thus the sire supreme address'd,
 Ægisthus' fate revolving in his breast,
 Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast
 Of Pluto sent, a blood-polluted ghost. 40
 "Perverse mankind ! whose wills, created free,
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree ;
 All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,
 And follies are miscall'd the crimes of fate.

When to his lust Ægisthus gave the rein, 45
 Did fate, or we, the adulterous act constrain ?
 Did fate, or we, when great Atrides died,
 Urge the bold traitor to the regicide ?
 Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd
 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd ; 50
 To warn the wretch, that young Orestes, grown
 To manly years, should re-assert the throne.
 Yet, impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
 He plunged into the gulf which Heaven foretold."

Here paused the god ; and pensive thus replies 55
 Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes :

" Oh thou, from whom the whole creation springs,
 The source of power on earth derived to kings !
 His death was equal to the direful deed ;
 So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed ! 60
 But grief and rage alternatè wound my breast
 For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress'd.
 Amid an isle, around whose rocky shore
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,
 The blameless hero from his wish'd-for home 65
 A goddess guards in her enchanted dome :
 (Atlas her sire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;
 The eternal columns which on earth he rears
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.) 70
 By his fair daughter is the chief confined,
 Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind :
 Successful all her soft caresses prove,
 To banish from his breast his country's love ;
 To see the smoke from his loved palace rise, 75
 While the dear isle in distant prospect lies,
 With what contentment could he close his eyes !
 And will omnipotence neglect to save
 The suffering virtue of the wise and brave ?
 Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore 80
 With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy power,
 Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,
 Unbless'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove ?"

“Daughter! what words have pass’d thy lips un-
weigh’d!”

Replied the Thunderer to the martial maid; 85

“Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress’d,
Of human race the wisest and the best.

Neptune, by prayer repentant rarely won,
Afflicts the chief, to avenge his giant son,
Whose visual orb Ulysses robb’d of light; 90

Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might!
Him young Thoösa bore, (the bright increase
Of Phorcys, dreaded in the sounds and seas,)
Whom Neptune eyed with bloom of beauty bless’d,
And in his cave the yielding nymph compress’d. 95

For this, the god constrains the Greek to roam,
A hopeless exile from his native home,
From death alone exempt; but cease to mourn;
Let all combine to achieve his wish’d return:
Neptune atoned, his wrath shall now refrain, 100
Or thwart the synod of the gods in vain.”

“Father and king adored!” Minerva cried,
“Since all who in the Olympian bower reside
Now make the wandering Greek their public care,
Let Hermes to the Atlantic isle repair; 105

Bid him, arrived in bright Calypso’s court,
The sanction of the assembled powers report:
That wise Ulysses to his native land
Must speed, obedient to their high command.
Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110

Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care:
’Tis mine to form his green, unpractised years,
In sage debates; surrounded with his peers,
To save the state, and timely to restrain
The bold intrusion of the suitor train; 115

Who crowd his palace, and with lawless power
His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste.
There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire 120
That from his realm retards his godlike sire:

Delivering early to the voice of fame
The promise of a great, immortal name."

She said: the sandals of celestial mould,
Fledged with ambrosial plumes, and rich with gold,
Surround her feet: with these sublime she sails 126
The aerial space, and mounts the winged gales:
O'er earth and ocean wide prepared to soar,
Her dreaded arm a beamy javelin bore,
Ponderous and vast; which, when her fury burns,
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'er-
turns. 131

From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,
And in the realms of Ithaca descends.
Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise
Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes: 135
(Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land:)
A glittering spear waved awful in her hand.

There in the portal placed, the heaven-born maid
Enormous riot and misrule survey'd.
On hides of beeves before the palace gate 140
(Sad spoils of luxury) the suitors sat.

With rival art, and ardour in their mien,
At chess they vie, to captivate the queen;
Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,
A menial train the flowing bowl supply: 145
Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,
And form the costly feast with busy care.

There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
Glowing celestial sweet, with godlike grace
Amid the circle shines: but hope and fear 150
(Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.

Now, imaged in his mind, he sees restored
In peace and joy the people's rightful lord:
The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword.
While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd,
'The stranger-guest the royal youth beheld: 156
Grieved that a visitant so long should wait
Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate,

Instant he flew with hospitable haste,
And the new friend with courteous air embraced :
" Stranger ! whoe'er thou art, securely rest, 161
Affianced in my faith, a ready guest :
Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
And then the purpose of thy soul declare."
Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes, 165
And to the dome the unknown celestial leads.
The spear receiving from her hand he placed
Against a column, fair with sculpture graced ;
Where seemly ranged in peaceful order stood
Ulysses' arms, now long disused to blood. 170
He led the goddess to the sovereign seat,
Her feet supported with a stool of state,
A purple carpet spread the pavement wide ;
Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side ;
Far from the suitor train, a brutal crowd, 175
With insolence, and wine, elate and loud :
Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,
If haply conscious, of his father's fate.
The golden ewer a maid obsequious brings,
Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs ; 180
With copious water the bright vase supplies
A silver laver of capacious size :
They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
They heap the glittering canisters with bread :
Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185
Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast !
Delicious wines the attending herald brought ;
The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.
Lured with the vapour of the fragrant feast,
In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste : 190
Marshall'd in order due, to each a sewer
Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ewer.
Luxurious then they feast. Observant round
Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.
The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195
And form to measured airs the mazy dance :

To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,
Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire :
Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing
High strains responsive to the vocal string. 200

Meanwhile, in whispers to his heavenly guest
His indignation thus the prince express'd :

“ Indulge my rising grief, while these, my friend,
With song and dance the pompous revel end.
Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays 205
When for the dear delight another pays.

His treasured stores these cormorants consume,
Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210

Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,
With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,
Precipitant in fear would wing their flight,
And curse their cumbrous pride's unwieldy weight.
But ah, I dream ! the appointed hour is fled ; 215

And hope, too long with vain delusion fed,
Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
Gives to the roll of death his glorious name !
With venial freedom let me now demand
Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land ; 220
Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite
And to what ship I owe the friendly freight.

Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,
Or number'd in my father's social train ?
All who deserved his choice, he made his own, 225
And, curious much to know, he far was known.”

“ My birth I boast,” the blue-eyed virgin cries,
“ From great Anchialus, renown'd and wise :
Mentes my name ; I rule the Taphian race,
Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace ;
A duteous people, and industrious isle, 231
To naval arts inured, and stormy toil.
Freighted with iron from my native land,
I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand ;

To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass, 235
A just proportion of refulgent brass.
Far from your capital my ship resides
At Reithrus, and secure at anchor rides ;
Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,
Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below. 240
Thence to revisit your imperial dome,
An old hereditary guest I come :
Your father's friend. Laertes can relate
Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;
Who press'd with heart-corroding grief and years,
To the gay court a rural shed prefers, 246
Where, sole of all his train, a matron sage
Supports with homely food his drooping age,
With feeble steps from marshalling his vines
Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250
“ With friendly speed, induced by erring fame,
To hail Ulysses' safe return, I came ;
But still the frown of some celestial power
With envious joy retards the blissful hour.
Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair ; 255
He lives, he breathes this heavenly vital air,
Among a savage race, whose shelfy bounds
With ceaseless roar the foaming deep surrounds.
The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,
To me, no seer, the inspiring gods suggest ; 260
Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetic eye
To judge the winged omens of the sky.
Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain :
Though adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265
And soon restore him to his regal seat.
But, generous youth ! sincere and free declare,
Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir ?
For sure Ulysses in your look appears,
The same his features, if the same his years. 270
Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy
Ere Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy ;

But, parting then for that detested shore,
Our eyes, unhappy ! never greeted more."

"To prove a genuine birth," the prince replies,
"On female truth assenting faith relies : 276
Thus manifest of right, I build my claim
Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,
Ulysses' son : but happier he, whom fate
Hath placed beneath the storms that toss the great !
Happier the son, whose hoary sire is bless'd 281
With humble affluence, and domestic rest !
Happier than I, to future empire born,
But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn !"

To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine :
"Oh, true descendant of a sceptred line ! 286
The gods a glorious fate from anguish free
To chaste Penelope's increase decree.
But say, you jovial troop so gayly dress'd,
Is this a bridal or a friendly feast ? 290
Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,
Unseemly flown with insolence and wine ?
Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy
Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye."

"Magnificence of old," the prince replied, 295
"Beneath our roof with virtue could reside ;
Unblamed abundance crown'd the royal board,
What time this dome revered her prudent lord :
Who now (so Heaven decrees) is doom'd to mourn,
Bitter constraint, erroneous and forlorn. 300
Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain,
Had fall'n surrounded with his warlike train ;
Or safe return'd, the race of glory pass'd,
New to his friends' embrace, and breathed his last !
Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes would
raise 305

Historic marbles to record his praise ;
His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
Had with transmissive honour graced his son.
Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost : 310

Vanish'd at once ! unheard of, and unknown !
And I his heir in misery alone.
Nor for a dear lost father only flow
The filial tears, but wo succeeds to wo :
To tempt the spouseless queen with amorous wiles,
Resort the nobles from the neighbouring isles ; 316
From Samos, circled with the Ionian main,
Dulichium, and Zacynthus' sylvan reign :
Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed to ascend,
The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320
She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,
Her heart detesting what her ear allows.
They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
My stores in riotous expense devour,
In feast and dance the mirthful months employ, 325
And meditate my doom to crown their joy."

With tender pity touch'd, the goddess cried :
" Soon may kind Heaven a sure relief provide ;
Soon may your sire discharge the vengeance due,
And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue ! 330
Oh ! in that portal should the chief appear,
Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,
In radiant panoply his limbs incased :
(For so of old my father's court he graced,
When social mirth unbent his serious soul, 335
O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl :)
He then from Ephyre, the fair domain
Of Ilus, sprung from Jason's royal strain,
Measured a length of seas, a toilsome length, in vain.
For, voyaging to learn the direful art 340
To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart ;
Observant of the gods, and sternly just
Ilus refused to impart the baneful trust :
With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fired,
The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desired. 345
Appear'd he now with such heroic port,
As then conspicuous at the Taphian court ;
Soon should yon boasters cease their haughty strife,
Or each atone his guilty love with life.

But of his wish'd return the care resign ; 350
Be future vengeance to the powers divine.
My sentence hear : with stern distaste avow'd,
To their own districts drive the suitor crowd :
When next the morning warms the purple east,
Convoke the peerage, and the gods attest ; 355
The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;
And form sure plans to save the sinking state.
Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,
And the chaste queen connubial rites require ;
Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360
To great Icarus, whose paternal care
Will guide her passion, and reward her choice
With wealthy dower, and bridal gifts of price.
Then let this dictate of my love prevail :
Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365
To learn your father's fortunes : fame may prove,
Or omen'd voice, (the messenger of Jove,)
Propitious to the search. Direct your toil
Through the wide ocean first to sandy Pyle ;
Of Nestor, hoary sage, his doom demand : 370
Thence speed your voyage to the Spartan strand ;
For young Atrides to the Achaian coast
Arrived the last of all the victor host.
If yet Ulysses views the light, forbear,
Till the fleet hours restore the circling year. 375
But if his soul hath wing'd the destined flight,
Inhabitant of deep disastrous night,
Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,
Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380
A hero's honours let the hero have.
With decent grief the royal dead deplored,
For the chaste queen select an equal lord.
Then let revenge your daring mind employ,
By fraud or force the suitor train destroy, 385
And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.
Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fired
With great revenge, immortal praise acquired ?

His virgin sword, Ægisthus' veins imbrued;
 The murderer fell, and blood atoned for blood. 390
 Oh greatly bless'd with every blooming grace!
 With equal steps the paths of glory trace;
 Join to that royal youth's your rival name,
 And shine eternal in the sphere of fame.
 But my associates now my stay deplore, 395
 Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.
 Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed;
 My praise the precept is, be thine the deed."
 "The counsel of my friend," the youth rejoin'd,
 "Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400
 So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)
 Their sage experience to the favourite child.
 But, since to part, for sweet reflection due,
 The genial viands let my train renew;
 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405
 Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give."
 "Defer the promised boon," the goddess cries,
 Celestial azure brightening in her eyes,
 "And let me now regain the Reithrian port:
 From Temese return'd, your royal court 410
 I shall revisit, and that pledge receive;
 And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave."
 Abrupt, with eagle speed she cut the sky;
 Instant invisible to mortal eye,
 Then first he recognised the ethereal guest; 415
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast:
 Heroic thoughts, infused, his heart dilate:
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate.
 At length, composed, he join'd the suitor throng,
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420
 His tender theme the charming lyrist chose
 Minerva's anger, and the dreadful woes
 Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.
 The thrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425
 Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds

With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends ;
Their sovereign's step a virgin train attends :
A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,
And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430

There from the portal, with her mild command,
Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand :
“ Phemius ! let acts of gods, and heroes old,
What ancient bards in hall and bower have told,
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ : 435

Such the pleased ear will drink with silent joy.
But, oh ! forbear that dear disastrous name,
To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame :
My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,
And every piercing note inflicts a wound.” 440

“ Why, dearest object of my duteous love,”
Replied the prince, “ will you the bard reprove ?
Oft, Jove's ethereal rays (resistless fire)
The chanter's soul and raptured song inspire ;
Instinct divine ! nor blame severe his choice, 445
Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice :
For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears ;
But old, the mind with inattention hears :
Patient permit the sadly pleasing strain ;
Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450
And in the public wo forget your own ;
You weep not for a perished lord alone.

What Greeks now wandering in the Stygian gloom,
With your Ulysses shared an equal doom !
Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455
And various labours of the loom beguile ;
There rule, from palace cares remote and free :
That care to man belongs, and most to me.”

Mature beyond his years, the queen admires
His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460
Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,
With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds ;
Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In slumber closed her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindled at the royal charms, 465
 Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms ;
 Intemperate rage a wordy war began ;
 But bold Telemachus assumed the man.
 " Instant," he cried, " your female discord end,
 Ye deedless boasters ! and the song attend : 476
 Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
 With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.
 Pacific now prolong the jovial feast ;
 But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,
 I, to the peers assembled, shall propose 475
 The firm resolve, I here in few disclose :
 No longer live the cankers of my court ;
 All to your several states with speed resort ;
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed ;
 Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove !—
 By him and all the immortal thrones above,
 (A sacred oath !) each proud oppressor slain, 485
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain."

Awed by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
 Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke : 490
 " What god to your untutor'd youth affords
 This headlong torrent of amazing words ?
 May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
 So bright a genius with the toils of state !"

" Those toils," Telemachus serene replies, 495
 " Have charms, with all their weight, to allure the
 wise.

Fast by the throne obsequious fame resides,
 And wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.
 Nor let Antinous rage, if strong desire
 Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire : 500
 Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,
 With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.

Whene'er Ulysses roams the realms of night,
Should factious power dispute my lineal right,
Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead ; 505
To your pretence their title would precede.
At least, the sceptre lost, I still should reign
Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train."

To this Eurymachus: "To Heaven alone
Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510
Your patrimonial stores in peace possess ;
Undoubted, all your filial claim confess :
Your private right should impious power invade,
The peers of Ithaca would arm in aid.
But say, that stranger guest who late withdrew, 515
What and from whence ? his name and lineage show.
His grave demeanour and majestic grace
Speak him descended of no vulgar race :
Did he some loan of ancient rite require,
Or came forerunner of your sceptred sire ?" 520

"Oh, son of Polybus !" the prince replies,
"No more my sire will glad these longing eyes:
The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.
That stranger-guest the Taphian realm obeys, 525
A realm defended with encircling seas.
Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old
High in Ulysses' social list enroll'd."

Thus he, though conscious of the ethereal guest,
Answer'd evasive of the sly request. 530
Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay ;
Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.
But when the star of eve with golden light
Adorn'd the matron brow of sable night,
The mirthful train, dispersing, quit the court, 535
And to their several domes to rest resort.
To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclined :
A towering structure to the palace join'd ;
In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs ;
The lighted torch, the sage Euryclea bears : 540

(Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,
For twenty beeves by great Laertes won ;
In rosy prime with charms attractive graced,
Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,
With dear esteem : too wise, with jealous strife 545
To taint the joys of sweet connubial life.
Sole with Telemachus her service ends,
A child she nursed him, and a man attends.)

While to his couch himself the prince address'd,
The duteous dame received the purple vest : 550
The purple vest with decent care disposed,
The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclosed,
The bolt, obedient to the silken cord,
To the strong staple's inmost depth restored, 554
Secured the valves. There wrapp'd in silent shade,
Pensive, the rules the goddess gave, he weigh'd ;
Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,
And in his raptured soul the vision glows.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

The Council of Ithaca.

TELEMACHUS, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists on their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them—the suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarius, her father; which he refuses—There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors—Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to inquire of his father's fortunes—Pallas, in the shape of Mentor, an ancient friend of Ulysses, helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the opening of the poem.—[The scene continues in the palace of Ulysses, in Ithaca.]

Now reddening from the dawn, the morning ray
Glow'd in the front of heaven, and gave the day.
The youthful hero, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.
A royal robe he wore with graceful pride, 5
A two-edged falchion threaten'd by his side,
Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,
And forth he moved majestic as a god.
Then by his heralds, restless of delay,
To council calls the peers; the peers obey. 10
Soon as in solemn form the assembly sat,
From his high dome himself descends in state.
Bright in his hand a ponderous javelin shined;
Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;

Pallas with grace divine his form improves, 15
And gazing crowds admire him as he moves.

His father's throne he fill'd : while distant stood
The hoary peers, and aged wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all. At last Ægyptius spoke ; 20
Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke :

A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,
A length of days had bent him to the ground.

His eldest hope in arms to Ilion came,
By great Ulysses taught the path to fame ;
But, hapless youth, the hideous Cyclop tore 25

His quivering limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.
Three sons remain'd : to climb with haughty fires

The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires ;
The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,
And ease the sire of half the cares of age. 30

Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
And, as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.

" Since great Ulysses sought the Phrygian plains,
Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.

Say then, ye peers, by whose command we meet ?
Why here once more in solemn council sit ? 36

Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose :
Arrives some message of invading foes ?

Or say, does high necessity of state
Inspire some patriot, and demand debate ? 40

The present synod speaks its author wise ;
Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies !"

He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,
Embraced the omen, and majestic rose ;
(His royal hand the imperial sceptre sway'd ;) 45
Then thus, addressing to Ægyptius, said :

" Reverend old man ! lo, here confess'd he stands
By whom ye meet ; my grief your care demands.
No story I unfold of public woes,
Nor bear advices of impending foes : 50
Peace the bless'd land, and joys incessant crown :
Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.

For my lost sire continual sorrows spring,
 The great, the good; your father and your king.
 Yet more; our house from its foundation bows, 55
 Our foes are powerful, and your sons the foes:
 Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come;
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome?
 If she must wed, from other hands require
 The dowry; is Telemachus her sire? 60
 Yet through my court the noise of revel rings,
 And wastes the wise frugality of kings.
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice;
 Scarce all my wine their midnight hours supplies.
 Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.
 But come it will, the time when manhood grants
 More powerful advocates than vain complaints.
 Approach that hour! insufferable wrong
 Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long. 70
 Rise then, ye peers! with virtuous anger rise;
 Your fame revere, but most the avenging skies.
 By all the deathless powers that reign above,
 By righteous Themis and by thundering Jove,
 (Themis, who gives to councils, or denies 75
 Success; and humbles, or confirms the wise,)
 Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow
 For my lost sire, nor add new wo to wo.
 If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
 Or, having power to wrong, betray'd the will, 80
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
 If ruin to your royal race ye dooni,
 Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85
 And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause:
 But while your sons commit the unpunish'd wrong,
 You make the arm of violence too strong."
 While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he
 frown'd,
 And dash'd the imperial sceptre to the ground. 90

The big round tear hung trembling in his eye :
The synod grieved, and gave a pitying sigh,
Then silent sat—at length Antinous burns
With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns :

“ Oh insolence of youth ! whose tongue affords 95
Such railing eloquence, and war of words.

Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
Thy erring voice displays thy mother's shame.
Elusive of the bridal day, she gives

Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100

Did not the sun, through heaven's wide azure roll'd,
For three long years the royal fraud behold,
While she, laborious in delusion, spread

The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread ?

Where as to life the wondrous figures rise, 105

Thus spoke the inventive queen with artful sighs :

“ Though cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,
Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour :

Cease, till to great Laertes I bequeath

A task of grief, his ornaments of death ; 110

Lest when the fates his royal ashes claim,
The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame :

When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,

Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.'

“ Thus she : at once the generous train complies,
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 116

The work she plied ; but, studious of delay,

By night reversed the labours of the day.

While thrice the sun his annual journey made,

The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd ;

Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ; 121

The fourth, her maid unfolds the amazing tale.

We saw, as unperceived we took our stand,

The backward labours of her faithless hand.

Then urged, she perfects her illustrious toils ; 125

A wondrous monument of female wiles !

“ But you, oh peers ! and thou, oh prince ! give ear,
I speak aloud, that every Greek may hear ;

Dismiss the queen ; and if her sire approves,
Let him espouse her to the peer she loves : 130
Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,
Nor let a race of princes wait in vain.
Though with a grace divine her soul is bless'd,
And all Minerva breathes within her breast,
In wondrous arts than woman more renown'd, 135
And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd ;
Though Tyro nor Mycene match her name,
Nor great Alcmena ; (the proud boasts of fame ;)
Yet thus by Heaven adorn'd, by Heaven's decree
She shines with fatal excellence, to thee : 140
With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,
Till righteous Heaven reclaim her stubborn breast.
What though from pole to pole resounds her name !
The son's destruction waits the mother's fame ;
For, till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145
Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed."

While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies :
" Ev'n nature starts, and what ye ask denies.
Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
Who gave me life, and nursed my infant years ? 150
While sad on foreign shores Ulysses treads,
Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades ;
How to Icarius in the bridal hour
Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dower ?
How from my father should I vengeance dread ! 155
How would my mother curse my hated head !
And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise !
Abhorr'd by all, accursed my name would grow,
The earth's disgrace, and human kind my foe. 160
If this displease, why urge ye here your stay ?
Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away :
Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
There ply the early feast and late carouse.
But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165
For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed ; .

Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!
By him, and all the immortal host above,
(A sacred oath,) if heaven the power supply,
Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die." 170

With that, two eagles from a mountain's height
By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;
Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
Above the assembled peers they wheel on high, 175
And clang their wings, and hovering beat the sky;
With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.
They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and necks they
rend, 179

And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend:
Then, sailing o'er the domes and towers, they fly
Full towards the east, and mount into the sky.

The wondering rivals gaze with cares oppress'd,
And chilling horrors freeze in every breast.
Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185
The prince of augurs, Halitherses, rose:
Prescient he view'd the aerial tracks, and drew
A sure presage from every wing that flew.

"Ye sons," he cried, "of Ithaca, give ear,
Hear all! but chiefly you, oh rivals! hear. 190
Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;
Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.
Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
We and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.
Why cease we then the wrath of Heaven to stay?
Be humbled all, and lead, ye great, the way. 196
For lo! my words no fancied woes relate:
I speak from science, and the voice is fate.

"When great Ulysses sought the Phrygian shores,
To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty towers, 200
Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold:
Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.
'I see,' I cried, 'his woes, a countless train;
I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main; 204

How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams:
Now twice ten years are pass'd and now he comes!"

To whom Eurymachus: "Fly, dotard, fly,
With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.
Go prophesy at home, thy sons advise: 209
Here thou art sage in vain—I better read the skies.
Unnumber'd birds glide through the aerial way,
Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below,
Ulysses lies! oh wert thou laid as low!
Then would that busy head no broils suggest, 215
Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breast.
From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
And interest, not the god, thy voice inspires.
His guideless youth, if thy experienced age
Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220
Vengeance deserved thy malice shall repress,
And but augment the wrongs thou wouldst redress:
Telemachus may bid the queen repair
To great Icarius, whose paternal care
Will guide her passion, and reward her choice 225
With wealthy dower, and bridal gifts of price.
Till she retires, determined we remain,
And both the prince and augur threat in vain:
His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230
Threat on, oh prince! elude the bridal day,
Threat on, till all thy stores in waste decay.
True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames:
But never from this nobler suit we cease; 235
For wealth and beauty less than virtue please."

To whom the youth: "Since then in vain I tell
My numerous woes, in silence let them dwell.
But Heaven and all the Greeks have heard my
wrongs:

To Heaven and all the Greeks redress belongs. 240
Yet this I ask, (nor be it ask'd in vain,)
A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main,

The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,
And seek my royal sire from shore to shore ;
If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245
Or to be learn'd from oracles alone.
If yet he lives, with patience I forbear,
Till the fleet hours restore the circling year :
But if already wandering in the train
Of empty shades ; I measure back the main, 250
Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,
And yield his consort to the nuptial bed."

He ceased ; and while abash'd the peers attend,
Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend. 254
(When fierce in arms he sought the scenes of war,
" My friend," he cried, " my palace be thy care ;
Years roll'd on years my godlike sire decay,
Guard thou his age, and his behests obey.")
Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around,
That flash'd with rage ; and as he spoke, he frown'd :
" Oh never, never more let king be just, 261
Be mild in power, or faithful to his trust !
Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,
Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God ;
Since he who like a father held his reign, 265
So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain !
True, while my friend is grieved, his griefs I share ;
Yet now the rivals are my smallest care :
They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,
Ere long shall pay—their forfeit lives the price. 270
But against you, ye Greeks ! ye coward train !
Gods ! how my soul is moved with just disdain !
Dumb ye shall stand, and not one tongue affords
His injured prince the little aid of words."

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd : 275
" Oh pride of words, and arrogance of mind !
Wouldst thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise ?
Join all your powers ! in arms, ye Greeks, arise !
Yet would your powers in vain our strength oppose :
The valiant few o'ermatch a host of foes. 280

Should great Ulysses stern appear in arms,
While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms ;
Though to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
Torn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.

But hence retreating to your domes repair, 285
To arm the vessel, Mentor, be thy care,
And, Halitherses, thine : be each his friend ;
Ye loved the father : go, the son attend.

But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay
Safe in the court, nor tempt the watery way.” 290

Then, with a rushing sound, the assembly bend,
Diverse their steps : the rival rout ascend
The royal dome ; while sad the prince explores
The neighbouring main, and sorrowing treads the
shores.

There as the waters o’er his hands he shed, 295
The royal suppliant to Minerva pray’d :

“ Oh goddess ! who descending from the skies
Vouchsafed thy presence to my wondering eyes,
By whose commands the raging deeps I trace,
And seek my sire through storms and rolling seas !
Hear from thy heavens above, oh warrior maid ! 301
Descend once more, propitious to my aid.

Without thy presence vain is thy command :
Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.”

Indulgent to his prayer, the goddess took 305
Sage Mentor’s form, and thus like Mentor spoke :

“ Oh prince, in early youth divinely wise,
Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise !
If to the son the father’s worth descends,
O’er the wide waves success thy ways attends : 310
To tread the walks of death he stood prepared ;
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dared.

Were not wise sons descendant of the wise,
And did not heroes from brave heroes rise, 314
Vain were my hopes : few sons attain the praise
Of their great sires, and most their sires disgrace.
But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
And all Penelope thy soul inspires,

Go, and succeed! the rivals' aims despise;
 For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320
 Blind they rejoice, though now, ev'n now they fall;
 Death hastes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them all!
 And lo, with speed we plough the watery way;
 My power shall guard thee, and my hand convey:
 The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325
 Through seas and realms companion of thy care.
 Thou to the court ascend; and to the shores,
 When night advances, bear the naval stores;
 Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,
 And generous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies.
 Meanwhile the mariners, by my command, 331
 Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
 Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides;
 The best I choose to waft thee o'er the tides."

She spoke: to his high dome the prince returns,
 And, as he moves, with royal anguish mourns. 336
 'Twas riot all, among the lawless train;
 Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
 Arrived, his hand the gay Antinous press'd,
 And thus deriding, with a smile address'd: 340

"Grieve not, oh daring prince, that noble heart:
 Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.
 Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
 Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
 Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345
 The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides."

"Is this," returns the prince, "for mirth a time?
 When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;
 The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;
 The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350
 Suffice it to have spent with swift decay
 The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.
 But now the wise instructions of the sage,
 And manly thoughts inspired by manly age,
 Teach me to seek redress for all my wo, 355
 Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.

Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain :
 A private voyager I pass the main.
 Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow ;
 And where on earth I live, I live your foe." 360

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to
 stay,
 Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feast,
 Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,
 And each in jovial mood his mate address'd : 365

"Tremble ye not, oh friends, and coward fly,
 Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die ?
 To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,
 Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies :
 Or comes from Ephyre with poisons fraught, 370
 And kills us all in one tremendous draught !"

"Or who can say," his gamesome mate replies,
 "But, while the dangers of the deeps he tries,
 He, like his sire, may sink, deprived of breath,
 And punish us unkindly by his death ? 375
 What mighty labours would he then create,
 To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
 The royal palace to the queen convey,
 Or him she blesses in the bridal day !"

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys, 380
 Where lay the treasures of the Ithacian race :
 Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blazed ;
 There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures graced ;
 Here jars of oil breathed forth a rich perfume ;
 There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome : 385
 (Pure flavoured wine, by gods in bounty given,
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heaven.)
 Untouch'd they stood, till, his long labours o'er,
 The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.
 A double strength of bars secur'd the gates : 390
 Fast by the door the wise Euryclea waits :
 Euryclea, who, great Ops, thy lineage shared,
 And watch'd all night, all day, a faithful guard.

To whom the prince : " Oh thou, whose guardian
care

Nursed the most wretched king that breathes the air !
Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand, 396
Till great Ulysses views his native land.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd ;
Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd ;
And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400
Prepared, ere yet descends the evening hour.
For when the favouring shades of night arise,
And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,
Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,
To seek Ulysses through the watery way." 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,
And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.

" Oh whither, whither flies my son !" she cried,
" To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide ?
In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410
And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.

The watery way ill fated if thou try,
All, all must perish, and by fraud you die !
Then stay, my child ! storms beat, and rolls the main,
Oh, beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain !"

" Far hence," replied the prince, " thy fears be
driven: 416

Heaven calls me forth ; these counsels are of Heaven.
But, by the powers that hate the perjured, swear,
To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
Nor uncompell'd the dangerous truth betray, 420
Till twice six times descends the lamp of day :
Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,
And grief destroy what time a while would spare."

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
Attests the all-seeing sovereign of the skies. 425
Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,
The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.
While to the rival train the prince returns,
The martial goddess with impatience burns ;

Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size, 430
 With speed divine from street to street she flies,
 She bids the mariners prepared, to stand,
 When night descends, imbodied on the strand.
 Then to Noemon swift she runs, she flies,
 And asks a bark: the chief a bark supplies. 435

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,
 Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.
 The goddess shoved the vessel from the shores,
 And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.
 Full in the openings of the spacious main 440
 It rides; and now descends the sailor train.

Next to the court, impatient of delay,
 With rapid step the goddess urged her way:
 There every eye with slumberous chains she bound,
 And dashed the flowing goblet to the ground. 445
 Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,
 Reel'd from the palace, and retired to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's reverend form array'd,
 Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid:
 "Lo! on the seas, prepared, the vessel stands, 450
 The impatient mariner thy speed demands."
 Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads;
 The footsteps of the deity he treads.
 Swift to the shore they move: along the strand
 The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

He bids them bring their stores; the attending
 train
 Load the tall bark, and launch into the main.
 The prince and goddess to the stern ascend;
 To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.
 Full from the west she bids fresh breezes blow; 460
 The sable billows foam and roar below.
 The chief his orders gives; the obedient band
 With due observance wait the chief's command:
 With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
 The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465
 High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails
 Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales;

The crooked keel the parting surge divides,
And to the stern retreating roll the tides.
And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine
The holy goblet to the powers divine ; 471
Imploring all the gods that reign above,
But chief the blue-eyed progeny of Jove.
Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

The Interview of Telemachus and Nestor.

TELEMACHUS, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the seashore to Neptune—Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming; and Nestor relates what passed in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses—They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors—Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus—The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace—The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva; and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.—[The scene lies on the seashore of Pylos.]

THE sacred sun, above the waters raised,
Through heaven's eternal, brazen portals blazed;
And wide o'er earth diffused his cheering ray,
To gods and men to give the golden day.
Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls,
Before old Neleus' venerable walls.
There suppliant to the monarch of the flood,
At nine green theatres the Pylians stood,
Each held five hundred, (a deputed train,)
At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain.
They taste the entrails, and the altars load
With smoking thighs, an offering to the god.
Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,
And furl their sails, and issue on the land.

Telemachus already press'd the shore ; 15
Not first, the power of wisdom march'd before,
And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,
Admonish'd thus his well attending mind :

“ Proceed, my son ! this youthful shame expel ;
An honest business never blush to tell. 20

To learn what fates thy wretched sire detain,
We pass'd the wide, immeasurable main.
Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,
With reverend awe, but decent confidence :
Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies ; 25
And sure he will : for wisdom never lies.”

“ Oh tell me, Mentor ! tell me, faithful guide,”
The youth with prudent modesty replied,
“ How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,
Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age ? 30
Awful the approach, and hard the task appears,
To question wisely men of riper years.”

To whom the martial goddess thus rejoin'd :
“ Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting
mind ;

And others, dictated by heavenly power, 35
Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.
For naught unprosperous shall thy ways attend,
Born with good omens, and with Heaven thy friend.”

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :
As swift, the youth pursued the way she led ; 40
And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
Where sat, encompass'd with his sons, the sire.

The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood
Transfix'd the fragments, some prepared the food :
In friendly throngs they gather to embrace 45
Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.

Pisistratus was first to grasp their hands,
And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;
Along the shore the illustrious pair he led,
Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed. 50

To each a portion of the feast he bore,
And held the golden goblet foaming o'er ;

Then first approaching to the elder guest,
The latent goddess in these words address'd :

“ Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep
These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep, 56
Thee first it fits, oh stranger ! to prepare
The due libation and the solemn prayer :
Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine :
Though much thy younger, and his years like mine,
He too, I deem, implores the powers divine : 61
For all mankind alike require their grace,
All born to want ; a miserable race ! ”

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl :
A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65
To see the preference due to sacred age
Regarded ever by the just and sage.
Of ocean's king she then implores the grace.

“ Oh thou ! whose arms this ample globe embrace,
Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70
On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line ;
Next grant the Pylian states their just desires,
Pleased with their hecatomb's ascending fires ;
Last deign 'Telemachus and me to bless,
And crown our voyage with desired success.” 75

Thus she : and having paid the rite divine,
Gave to Ulysses' son the rosy wine.
Suppliant he prayed. And now the victims dress'd
They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.
The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80
Thus mild, the pleasing conference began :

“ Now, gentle guests ! the genial banquet o'er,
It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
And whence your race ? on what adventure say,
Thus far you wander through the watery way ? 85
Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain,
Engage your journey o'er the pathless main ;
Where savage pirates seek through seas unknown
The lives of others, venturous of their own.”

Urged by the precepts by the goddess given, 90
And fill'd with confidence infused from Heaven,

The youth, whom Pallas destined to be wise
And famed among the sons of men, replies :

“ Inquirest thou, father! from what coast we came?
(Oh grace and glory of the Grecian name!) 95

From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
Brown with o'erarching shades and pendent woods,
Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
A private sorrow, not a public cause.

My sire I seek, where'er the voice of fame 100

Has told the glories of his noble name,
The great Ulysses ; famed from shore to shore
For valour much, for hardy suffering more.

Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
In arms he fought : with thee beheld her fall. 105

Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
Has Jove reserved, unheard of, and unknown ;
Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,

Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main ?
Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110

Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.

If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
Have learn'd his fate, the whole dark story clear :

And, oh ! whate'er Heaven destined to betide,
Let neither flattery sooth, nor pity hide. 115

Prepared I stand : he was but born to try
The lot of man ; to suffer, and to die.

Oh then, if ever through the ten years' war
The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care ;
If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120

True in his deed, and constant to his word ;
Far as thy mind through backward time can see,
Search all thy stores of faithful memory :

'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee.”
To him experienced Nestor thus rejoin'd : 125

“ Oh friend ! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind !

Shall I the long, laborious scene review,
And open all the wounds of Greece anew ?

What toils by sea ! where dark in quest of prey
Dauntless we roved ; Achilles led the way : 130

What toils by land ! where mix'd in fatal fight
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night :
 There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
 There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave :
 There, too, my son—ah, once my best delight, 135
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight ;
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
 A faultless body and a blameless mind :
 Antilochus— What more can I relate ?
 How trace the tedious series of our fate ? 140
 Not added years on years my task could close,
 The long historian of my country's woes :
 Back to thy native islands might'st thou sail,
 And leave half heard the melancholy tale.
 Nine painful years on that detested shore ; 145
 What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore !
 Still labouring on, till scarce at last we found
 Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.
 Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shined,
 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150
 Art thou the son of that illustrious sire ?
 With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.
 So like your voices, and your words so wise,
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.
 Thy sire and I were one ; nor varied aught 155
 In public sentence, or in private thought ;
 Alike to council or the assembly came,
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.
 But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
 And in their ships the conquering Greeks re-
 turn'd, 160
 'Twas God's high will the victors to divide,
 And turn the event, confounding human pride :
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust—
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just.)
 'Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165
 Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,
 The brother kings inspired with fell debate ;
 Who call'd to council all the Achaian state,

But call'd untimely, (not the sacred rite
Observed, nor heedful of the setting light, 170
Nor herald sworn the session to proclaim,
Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
To these the cause of meeting they explain,
And Menelaus moves to cross the main ;
Not so the king of men : he will'd to stay, 175
The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh, blind to fate !
The gods not lightly change their love or hate.
With ireful taunts each other they oppose,
Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180
Now different counsels every breast divide,
Each burns with rancour to the adverse side :
The unquiet night strange projects entertain'd :
(So Jove, that urged us to our fate, ordain'd.)
We with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185
And brought our captives and our stores aboard ;
But half the people with respect obey'd
The king of men, and at his bidding staid.
Now on the wings of winds our course we keep ;
(For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep ;)
For Tenedos we spread our eager oars, 191
There land, and pay due victims to the powers :
To bless our safe return, we join in prayer ;
But angry Jove dispersed our vows in air,
And raised new discord. Then (so Heaven decreed)
Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed : 196
Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
He there, though late, to please the monarch staid.
But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,
Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods. 200
With us, Tydides fear'd and urged his haste ;
And Menelaus came, but came the last.
He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian bay,
While yet we doubted of our watery way ;
If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205
(The safer road,) beside the Psyrian isle ;

Or the straight course to rocky Chios plough,
 And anchor under Mimas' shaggy brow ?
 We sought direction of the power divine :
 The god propitious gave the guiding sign ; 210
 Through the mid seas he bid our navy steer,
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear.
 The whistling winds already waked the sky ;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,
 With rapid swiftness cut the liquid way, 215
 And reach Gerestus at the point of day.
 There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune slain,
 High flaming please the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day shone, when, all their labours o'er,
 Tydides' vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore. 220
 But I to Pylos scud before the gales,
 The god still breathing on my swelling sails ;
 Separate from all, I safely landed here ;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 Yet what I learn'd, attend ; as here I sat, 225
 And ask'd each voyager each hero's fate :
 Curious to know and willing to relate.

“ Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
 Beneath Achilles' warlike son's command.
 Those, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230
 Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart ;
 And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coast,
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235
 And how the murderer paid his forfeit breath ;
 What lands so distant from that scene of death
 But trembling heard the fame ? and heard, admire
 How well the son appeased his slaughter'd sire ?
 Ev'n to the unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240
 Heaven gives posterity, t'avenge the deed.
 So fell Ægysthus ; and mayst thou, my friend,
 (On whom the virtues of thy sire descend,)
 Make future times thy equal act adore,
 And be what brave Orestes was before !” 245

The prudent youth replied, "Oh thou, the grace,
 The lasting glory of the Grecian race!
 Just was the vengeance, and to latest days
 Shall long posterity resound the praise.
 Some god this arm with equal prowess bless! 250
 And the proud suitors shall its force confess;
 Injurious men! who while my soul is sore
 Of fresh affronts, are meditating more.
 But Heaven denies this honour to my hand,
 Nor shall my father repossess the land; 255
 The father's fortune never to return,
 And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn!"

Thus he: and Nestor took the word: "My son,
 Is it then true, as distant rumours run,
 That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms 260
 Thy palace fill with insults and alarms?
 Say, is the fault, through tame submission, thine?
 Or leagued against thee, do thy people join,
 Moved by some oracle, or voice divine?
 And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate 265
 An hour of vengeance for the afflicted state;
 When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,
 Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.
 But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
 The happy son will, as the father, aid, 270
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care
 In every danger and in every war:
 Never on man did heavenly favour shine
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd, and divine,
 As those with which Minerva mark'd thy sire,) 275
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire!
 Soon should their hopes in humble dust be laid,
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed."

"Ah! no such hope," the prince with sighs replies,
 "Can touch my breast; that blessing Heaven de-
 nies. 280

Ev'n by celestial favour were it given,
 Fortune or fate would cross the will of Heaven."

“What words are these, and what imprudence
thine?”

Thus interposed the martial maid divine,
“Forgetful youth! but know, the power above 285
With ease can save each object of his love;
Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace;
Nor lost in time, nor circumscribed by place.
Happier his lot, who, many sorrows pass’d,
Long labouring gains his natal shore at last; 290
Than who, too speedy, hastes to end his life
By some stern ruffian, or adulterous wife.
Death only is the lot which none can miss,
And all is possible to Heaven, but this.
The best, the dearest favourite of the sky 295
Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.”

“Thus check’d,” replied Ulysses’ prudent heir:
“Mentor, no more—the mournful thought forbear;
For he no more must draw his country’s breath,
Already snatch’d by fate, and the black doom of
death! 300

Pass we to other subjects; and engage
On themes remote the venerable sage;
(Who thrice has seen the perishable kind
Of men decay, and through three ages shined
Like gods majestic, and like gods in mind;) 305
For much he knows, and just conclusions draws,
From various precedents, and various laws.
Oh son of Neleus! awful Nestor, tell
How he, the mighty Agamemnon, fell;
By what strange fraud Ægythus wrought, relate,
(By force he could not,) such a hero’s fate? 311
Lived Menelaus not in Greece? or where
Was then the martial brother’s pious care?
Condemn’d perhaps some foreign shore to tread;
Or sure Ægythus had not dared the deed.” 315

To whom the full days: “Illustrious youth,
Attend (though partly thou hast guess’d) the truth.
For had the martial Menelaus found
The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground;

Nor earth had hid his carcass from the skies, 320
Nor Grecian virgins shriek'd his obsequies,
But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,
And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.
While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd; 325
He, stretch'd at ease in Argos' calm recess,
(Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless,)
With flattery's insinuating art
Soothed the frail queen, and poison'd all her heart.
At first, with worthy shame and decent pride, 330
The royal dame his lawless suit denied;
For virtue's image yet possess'd her mind,
Taught by a master of the tuneful kind :
Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,
Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335
True to his charge, the bard preserved her long
In honour's limits ; such the power of song.
But when the gods these objects of their hate
Dragg'd to destruction by the links of fate ;
The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340
And left all helpless on a desert isle :
There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,
She fell to lust a voluntary prey. 345
Ev'n to the temple stalk'd the adulterous spouse,
With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,
With images, with garments, and with gold ;
And odorous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.
“ Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way,
With Menelaus, through the curling sea. 351
But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,
Crown'd with the temple of the Athenian dame ;
Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expired ;
(Phrontes, of all the sons of men admired 355
To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
When the storm thickens, and the billows boil ;)

While yet he exercised the steerman's art,
 Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart ;
 Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground.
 And now, the rites discharged, our course we keep
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep : 365
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,
 Sudden the Thunderer blackens all the skies,
 And the winds whistle, and the surges roll
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet ; 370
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,
 Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
 The streams of Jordan issue to the main.
 There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep, 375
 And views Gortyna on the western side ;
 On this rough Auster drove the impetuous tide :
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,
 And heaved the fleet into the neigh'ring bay.
 Thus saved from death, they gain'd the Phæstian
 shores, 380
 With shatter'd vessels and disabled oars :
 But five tall barks the winds and waters toss'd,
 Far from their fellows, on the Egyptian coast.
 There wander'd Menelaus through foreign shores,
 Amassing gold, and gathering naval stores ; 385
 While cursed Ægysthus the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Seven years, the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd ;
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restored, 390
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to funeral flame
 The vile assassin, and adulterous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395

And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,
With gifts of price and ponderous treasure fraught.
Hence warn'd, my son, beware! nor idly stand
Too long a stranger to thy native land;
Lest heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400
While lawless feasters in thy palace sway;
Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil;
And thou return, with disappointed toil,
From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle.
Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more, 405
And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore.
He, wandering long, a wider circle made,
And many-languaged nations has survey'd;
And measured tracks unknown to other ships
Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps: 410
(A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
Which scarce the sea fowl in a year o'erfly :)
Go then; to Sparta take the watery way,
Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay;
Or, if by land thou choose thy course to bend, 415
My steeds, my chariots, and my sons, attend:
Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,
Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
And sure he will; for Menelaus is wise." 420
Thus while he speaks the ruddy sun descends,
And twilight gray her evening shade extends.
Then thus the blue-eyed maid: "Oh full of days!
Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.
Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine, 425
Sacred to Neptune and the powers divine.
The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep:
Nor fits it to prolong the heavenly feast,
Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest." 430
So spake Jove's daughter, the celestial maid.
The sober train attended and obey'd.
The sacred heralds on their hands around
Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets crown'd;

From bowl to bowl the holy beverage flows ; 435
While to the final sacrifice they rose.
The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
And pour, above, the consecrated stream.
And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,
The youthful hero and the Athenian maid 440
Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
And in their hollow bark to pass the night :
But this the hospitable sage denied.

“ Forbid it, Jove ! and all the gods ! ” he cried,
“ Thus from my walls the much-loved son to send
Of such a hero, and of such a friend ! 446
Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
Whom Heaven denies the blessing to relieve ?
Me would ye leave, who boast imperial sway,
When beds of royal state invite your stay ? 450
No—long as life this mortal shall inspire,
Or as my children imitate their sire,
Here shall the wandering stranger find his home,
And hospitable rites adorn the dome.”

“ Well hast thou spoke,” the blue-eyed maid replies, 455
“ Beloved old man ! benevolent as wise.
Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
And let thy words Telemachus persuade :
He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue ;
I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460
Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.
For I alone sustain their naval cares,
Who boast experience from these silver hairs ;
All youths the rest, whom to this journey move
Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love.
There in the vessel shall I pass the night ; 466
And soon as morning paints the fields of light,
I go to challenge from the Caucons bold
A debt contracted in the days of old.
But this thy guest, received with friendly care, 470
Let thy strong coursers swift to Sparta bear ;

Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
And be thy son companion of his way."

Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
And soars an eagle through the liquid skies. 475
Vision divine! the throng'd spectators gaze,
In holy wonder fix'd, and still amaze.

But chief the reverend sage admired; he took
The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke:

"Oh, happy youth! and favour'd of the skies, 480
Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!

Whose early years for future worth engage,
No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.

For lo! none other of the court above
Than she, the daughter of almighty Jove, 485
Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
Confess'd is thine, as once thy father's aid.

So guide me, goddess! so propitious shine
On me, my consort, and my royal line!
A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke, 490
Untamed, unconscious of the galling yoke,
With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns."

Submissive thus the hoary sire preferr'd
His holy vow: the favouring goddess heard. 495

Then, slowly rising, o'er the sandy space
Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
(A long procession,) timely marching home
In comely order to the regal dome.

There when arrived, on thrones around him placed,
His sons and grandsons the wide circle graced. 501
To these the hospitable sage, in sign

Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine:
(Late from the mellowing cask restored to light,
By ten long years refined, and rosy bright :) 505

To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
And sprinkled large libations on the ground.
Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid, 510
 And slept beneath the pompous colonnade :
 Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread
 (In age his equal) on a splendid bed :
 But in an inner court, securely closed,
 The reverend Nestor and his queen reposed. 515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn ;
 The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
 On polish'd stone before his palace gate :
 With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone, 520
 Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne ;
 But he descending to the infernal shade,
 Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the sceptre sway'd.
 His sons around him mild obeisance pay,
 And duteous take the orders of the day. 525
 First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed :
 Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed ;
 The last Pisistratus arose from rest :
 They came, and near him placed the stranger-guest.
 To these the senior thus declared his will : 530

“ My sons ! the dictates of your sire fulfil.
 To Pallas, first of gods, prepare the feast,
 Who graced our rites, a more than mortal guest.
 Let one, despatchful, bid some swain to lead
 A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead ; 535
 One seek the harbour where the vessels moor
 And bring thy friends, Telemachus ! ashore ;
 (Leave only two the galley to attend ;)
 Another to Laerceus must we send,
 Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold 540
 The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.
 The rest may here the pious duty share,
 And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,
 The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,
 And limpid waters from the living spring.” 545

He said, and busy each his care bestow'd ;
 Already at the gates the bullock low'd,

Already came the Ithacensian crew,
The dext'rous smith the tools already drew :
His pond'rous hammer and his anvil sound, 550
And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.
Nor was Minerva absent from the rite,
She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.
With reverend hand the king presents the gold,
Which round the intorted horns the gilder roll'd, 555
So wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold.
Young Aretus from forth his bridal bower
Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
And canisters of consecrated flour.
Stratius and Echephron the victim led ; 560
The axe was held by warlike Thrasymed,
In act to strike : before him Perseus stood,
The vase extending to receive the blood.
The king himself initiates to the power ;
Scatters with quivering hand the sacred flour, 565
And the stream sprinkles : from the curling brows
The hair collected in the fire he throws.
Soon as due vows on every part were paid,
And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,
Strong Thrasymed discharged the speedy blow 570
Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.
Down sunk the heavy beast : the females round,
Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound.
Nor scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join :
(The firstborn she, of old Clymenus' line ; 575
In youth by Nestor loved, of spotless fame,
And loved in age, Eurydice her name.)
From earth they rear him, struggling now with death ;
And Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.
The soul for ever flies : on all sides round 580
Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the
ground.
The beast they then divide, and disunite
The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite :
On these, in double cauls involved with art,
The choicest morsels lay from every part. 585

The sacred sage before his altar stands,
 Turns the burnt offering with his holy hands,
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire :
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.
 The thighs now sacrificed, and entrails dress'd, 590
 The assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.
 While these officious tend the rites divine,
 The last fair branch of the Nestorean line,
 Sweet Polycaste, took the pleasing toil
 To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil. 595
 O'er his fair limbs a flowery vest he threw,
 And issued, like a god, to mortal view.
 His former seat beside the king he found ;
 (His people's father with his peers around ;)
 All placed at ease the holy banquet join, 600
 And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.

The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress'd,
 The monarch turns him to his royal guest ;
 And for the promised journey bids prepare
 The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605
 Observant of his word, the word scarce spoke,
 The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
 Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
 And presents, such as suit the state of kings.
 The glittering seat Telemachus ascends ; 610
 His faithful guide Pisistratus attends ;
 With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew :
 He lash'd the coursers, and the coursers flew.
 Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held
 Their equal pace, and smoked along the field. 615
 The towers of Pylos sink, its views decay,
 Fields after fields fly back, till close of day ;
 Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way.

To Pheræ now, Diocleus' stately seat,
 (Of Alpheus' race,) the weary youths retreat. 620
 His house affords the hospitable rite,
 And pleased they sleep : (the blessing of the night.)
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn,

Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625
And from the sounding portico they flew.
Along the waving fields their way they hold,
The fields receding as their chariot roll'd :
Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,
And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night. 630

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

The Conference with Menelaus.

TELEMACHUS, with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Troy—He dwells more at large on the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return; from which he acquaints Telemachus that Ulysses is detained in the island of Calypso—In the mean time the suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home—Penelope is apprized of this; but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphthima.

AND now proud Sparta with their wheels resounds,
Sparta, whose walls a range of hills surrounds :
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends ;
Where sat Atrides mid his bridal friends,
With double vows invoking Hymen's power, 5
To bless his son's and daughter's nuptial hour.

That day, to great Achilles' son resign'd,
Hermione, the fairest of her kind,
Was sent to crown the long-protracted joy,
Espoused before the final doom of Troy : 10
With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train
Attend the nymph to Phthia's distant reign.
Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed
The virgin choir Alector's daughter led.
Brave Megapenthes, from a stolen amour 15
To great Atrides' age his handmaid bore :
To Helen's bed the gods alone assign
Hermione, to extend the regal line ;

On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,
Resembling Venus in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the king surround,
With festival and mirth the roofs resound :
A bard amid the joyous circle sings
High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;
While warbling to the varied strain, advance 25
Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance.
'Twas then that, issuing through the palace gate,
The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state :
On the bright eminence young Nestor shone,
And fast beside him great Ulysses' son : 30
Grave Eteoneus saw the pomp appear,
And speeding, thus address'd the royal ear :

“ Two youths approach, whose semblant features
prove

Their blood devolving from the source of Jove.
Is due reception deign'd, or must they bend 35
Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend ?”

“ Insensate !” with a sigh the king replies,
“ Too long, misjudging, have I thought thee wise :
But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,
Obdurate to reject the stranger guest ; 40
To those dear hospitable rites a foe,
Which in my wanderings oft relieved my wo :
Fed by the bounty of another's board,
Till pitying Jove my native realm restored—
Straight be the coursers from the car released, 45
Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.”

The seneschal rebuked, in haste withdrew ;
With equal haste a menial train pursue :
Part led the coursers, from the car enlarged,
Each to a crib with choicest grain surcharged ; 50
Part in a portico, profusely graced
With rich magnificence, the chariot placed :
Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,
Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight ;
Resplendent as the blaze of summer noon, 55
Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.

From room to room their eager view they bend ;
 Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend :
 Where a bright damsel train attends the guests
 With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests. 60
 Refresh'd, they wait them to the bower of state,
 Where, circled with his peers, Atrides sat :
 Throned next the king, a fair attendant brings
 The purest product of the crystal springs :
 High on a massy vase of silver mould, 65
 The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold ;
 In solid gold the purple vintage flows,
 And on the board a second banquet rose.
 When thus the king with hospitable port :

“ Accept this welcome to the Spartan court ; 70
 The waste of nature let the feast repair,
 Then your high lineage and your names declare ;
 Say from what sceptred ancestry ye claim,
 Recorded eminent in deathless fame ?
 For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race 75
 With signatures of such majestic grace.”

Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns
 The royal portion of the choicest chimes
 To each accepted friend : with grateful haste
 They share the honours of the rich repast. 80
 Sufficed, soft whispering thus to Nestor's son,
 His head reclined, young Ithacus begun :

“ View'st thou unmoved, oh ever-honour'd most !
 These prodigies of art, and wondrous cost !
 Above, beneath, around the palace shines 85
 The sunless treasure of exhausted mines :
 The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
 And studded amber darts a golden ray :
 Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
 My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove.” 90

The monarch took the word, and grave replied :
 “ Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride
 Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,
 Unchanged, immortal, and supremely bless'd !

With all my affluence, when my woes are weigh'd,
Envy will own the purchase dearly paid. 96
For eight slow-circling years by tempests toss'd,
From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coast,
(Sidon the capital,) I stretch'd my toil,
Through regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.
Next, Æthiopia's utmost bound explore, 101
And the parch'd borders of the Arabian shore :
Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,
O'er the warm Libyan wave to spread my sails :
That happy clime ! where each revolving year 105
The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear ;
And two fair crescents of translucent horn
The brows of all their young increase adorn :
The shepherd swains, with sure abundance bless'd,
On the fat flock and rural dainties feast ; 110
Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
But every season fills the foaming pail.
While, heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam ;
The best of brothers at his natal home,
By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115
Ends the sad evening of a stormy life :
Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,
These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd !
My wars, the copious theme of every tongue,
To you your fathers have recorded long : 120
How favouring Heaven repaid my glorious toils
With a sack'd palace, and barbaric spoils.
Oh ! had the gods so large a boon denied,
And life, the just equivalent, supplied
To those brave warriors, who, with glory fired, 125
Far from their country, in my cause expired !
Still in short intervals of pleasing wo,
Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
I to the glorious dead, for ever dear !
Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130
But oh ! Ulysses—deeper than the rest
That sad idea wounds my anxious breast !

My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain ;
 The bowl and tasteful viands tempt in vain ;
 Nor sleep's soft power can close my streaming eyes,
 When imaged to my soul his sorrows rise. 136
 No peril in my cause he ceased to prove,
 His labours equall'd only by my love :
 And both alike to bitter fortune born,
 For him to suffer, and for me to mourn! 140
 Whether he wanders on some friendly coast,
 Or glides in Stygian gloom a pensive ghost,
 No fame reveals ; but doubtful of his doom,
 His good old sire with sorrow to the tomb
 Declines his trembling steps ; untimely care 145
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir ;
 And the chaste partner of his bed and throne
 Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan."

While thus pathetic to the prince he spoke,
 From the brave youth the streaming passion broke :
 Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress'd, 151
 His face he shrouded with his purple vest :
 The conscious monarch pierced the coy disguise,
 And view'd his filial love with vast surprise :
 Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155
 To hear the youth inquire his father's fate.
 In this suspense, bright Helen graced the room ;
 Before her breathed a gale of rich perfume.
 So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
 The silver-shafted goddess of the chase ! 160
 The seat of majesty Adraste brings,
 With art illustrious, for the pomp of kings ;
 To spread the pall (beneath the regal chair)
 Of softest woof, is bright Alcippe's care.
 A silver canister, divinely wrought, 165
 In her soft hands the beauteous Phylo brought ;
 To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vase
 Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace :
 For Polybus her lord, (whose sovereign sway
 The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey,) 170

When to that court Atrides came, caress'd
 With vast munificence the imperial guest :
 Two lavers from the richest ore refined,
 With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd ;
 And bounteous from the royal treasure told 175
 'Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.

Alcandra, consort of his high command,
 A golden distaff gave to Helen's hand ;
 And that rich vase with living sculpture wrought,
 Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo 180
 brought ;

The silken fleece, impurpled for the loom,
 Rivall'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.
 The sovereign seat then Jove-born Helen press'd,
 And pleasing thus her sceptred lord address'd : 184

“ Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair,
 Speak they their lineage, or their names declare ?
 Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd,
 Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.
 With wonder wrapp'd, on yonder cheek I trace
 The feature of the Ulyssean race : 190

Diffused o'er each resembling line appear,
 In just similitude, the grace and air
 Of young Telemachus ! the lovely boy,
 Who bless'd Ulysses with a father's joy,
 What time the Greeks combined their social arms,
 To avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms !” 196

“ Just is thy thought,” the king assenting cries,
 “ Methinks Ulysses strikes my wondering eyes :
 Full shines the father in the filial frame,
 His port, his features, and his shape the same : 200
 Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow ;
 Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow !
 And when he heard the long disastrous store
 Of cares, which in my cause Ulysses bore ;
 Dismay'd, heart wounded with paternal woes, 205
 Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose :
 Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,
 His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.”

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The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,
Fated to wander from his natal coast !”

He ceased ; a gust of grief began to rise ;
Fast streams a tide from beauteous Helen’s eyes ;
Fast for the sire the filial sorrows flow ; 251
The weeping monarch swells the mighty wo :
Thy cheeks, Pisistratus, the tears bedew,
While pictured to thy mind appear’d in view
Thy martial brother : on the Phrygian plain 255
Extended pale, by swarthy Memnon slain !
But silence soon the son of Nestor broke,
And melting with fraternal pity spoke :

“ Frequent, oh king, was Nestor wont to raise
And charm attention with thy copious praise : 260
To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign’d
The glory of a firm capacious mind :
With that superior attribute control
This unavailing impotence of soul.
Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265
Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown’d :
But when from dewy shade emerging bright,
Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,
Let each deplore his dead : the rites of wo
Are all, alas ! the living can bestow : 270
O’er the congenial dust enjoin’d to shear
The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.
Then, mingling in the mournful pomp with you,
I’ll pay my brother’s ghost a warrior’s due,
And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name 275
Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame :
With strength and speed superior form’d, in fight
To face the foe, or intercept his flight :
Too early snatch’d by fate ere known to me !
I boast a witness of his worth in thee.” 280
“ Young and mature !” the monarch thus rejoins,
“ In thee renew’d the soul of Nestor shines :
Form’d by the care of that consummate sage,
In early bloom an oracle of age.

Whene'er his influence Jove vouchsafes to shower,
 To bless the natal, and the nuptial hour ; 286
 From the great sire transmissive to the race,
 The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.
 Such, happy Nestor ! was thy glorious doom ;
 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom, 290
 Expert of arms, and prudent in debate ;
 The gifts of Heaven to guard thy hoary state.
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.
 To move thy suit, Telemachus, delay, 295
 Till heaven's revolving lamp restores the day."

He said, Asphalion swift the laver brings ;
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs :
 Then from the rites of purity repair,
 And with keen gust the savoury viands share. 300
 Meantime, with genial joy to warm the soul,
 Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl ;
 Temper'd with drugs of sovereign use, to assuage
 The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage ;
 To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled Care, 305
 And dry the tearful sluices of Despair :
 Charm'd with that virtuous draught, the exalted
 mind

All sense of wo delivers to the wind.
 Though on the blazing pile his parent lay,
 Or a loved brother groan'd his life away, 310
 Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian force,
 Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse ;
 From morn to eve, impassive and serene,
 The man entranced would view the deathful scene.
 These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life, 315
 Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife ;
 Who sway'd the sceptre, where prolific Nile
 With various simples clothes the fatten'd soil.
 With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
 Of vegetable venom taints the plain ; 320
 From Pæon sprung, their patron god imparts
 To all the Pharian race his healing arts.

The beverage now prepared t' inspire the feast,
The circle thus the beauteous queen address'd :
 " Throned in omnipotence, supremest Jove 325
Tempers the fates of human race above ;
By the firm sanction of his sovereign will,
Alternate are decreed our good and ill.
To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,
And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330
Myself, assisting in the social joy,
Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit in Troy,
Sole witness of the deed I now declare :
Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.
 " Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own sabre
 gave, 336
In the vile habit of a village slave,
The foe deceived, he pass'd the tented plain,
In Troy to mingle with the hostile train.
In this attire, secure from searching eyes,
Till haply piercing through the dark disguise, 340
The chief I challenged ; he, whose practised wit
Knew all the serpent mazes of deceit,
Eludes my search : but when his form I view'd
Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,
His limbs in military purple dress'd ; 345
Each brightening grace the genuine Greek confess'd.
A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,
Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,
To keep his stay conceal'd ; the chief declared
The plans of war against the town prepared. 350
Exploring then the secrets of the state,
He learn'd what best might urge the Dardan fate :
And, safe returning to the Grecian host,
Sent many a shade to Pluto's dreary coast. 354
Loud grief resounded through the towers of Troy,
But my pleased bosom glow'd with secret joy :
For then, with dire remorse and conscious shame,
I view'd the effects of that disastrous flame,
Which, kindled by the imperious queen of love,
Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove : 360

And oft in bitterness of soul deplored
My absent daughter, and my dearer lord ;
Admired among the first of human race,
For every gift of mind and manly grace."

"Right well," replied the king, "your speech displays
365

The matchless merit of the chief you praise :
Heroes in various climes myself have found,
For martial deeds and depth of thought renown'd ;
But Ithacus, unrivall'd in his claim,
May boast a title to the loudest fame :
370
In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,
Wise to resolve, and patient to perform.

What wondrous conduct in the chief appear'd,
When the vast fabric of the steed we rear'd !
Some demon, anxious for the Trojan doom,
375

Urged you with great Deiphobus to come,
To explore the fraud ; with guile opposed to guile,
Slow pacing thrice around the insidious pile ;
Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,
Your accent varying as their spouses spoke :
380

The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,
But most Tydides' and my heart alarm'd :
To quit the steed we both impatient press,
Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.
Unmoved the mind of Ithacus remain'd :
385

And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd :
But Anticlus, unable to control,
Spoke loud the language of his yearning soul :
Ulysses straight, with indignation fired,
(For so the common care of Greece required,)
390

Firm to his lips his forceful hands applied,
Till on his tongue the fluttering murmurs died.
Meantime Minerva, from the fraudulent horse,
Back to the court of Priam bent your course."

"Inclement fate !" Telemachus replies ;
395

"Frail is the boasted attribute of wise :
The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,
Is in the common mass of matter lost !

But now let sleep the painful waste repair
Of sad reflection, and corroding care." 400

He ceased ; the menial fair that round her wait,
At Helen's beck prepare the room of state ;
Beneath an ample portico they spread
The downy fleece to form the slumberous bed ;
And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405
Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold ;
Then through the illumined dome, to balmy rest
The obsequious herald guides each princely guest ;
While to his regal bower the king ascends,
And beauteous Helen on her lord attends. 410

Soon as the morn, in orient purple dress'd,
Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate east,
The monarch rose ; magnificent to view,
The imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw :
The glittering zone athwart his shoulder cast, 415
A starry falchion low depending graced ;
Clasp'd on his feet the embroider'd sandals shine ;
And forth he moves, majestic and divine :
Instant to young Telemachus he press'd,
And thus benevolent his speech address'd : 420

" Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report
What cause hath led you to the Spartan court ?
Do public or domestic cares constrain
This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main ?"
" Oh highly favour'd delegate of Jove !" 425

Replies the prince ; " inflamed with filial love,
And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,
A suppliant to your royal court I come,
Our sovereign seat a lewd usurping race
With lawless riot and misrule disgrace ; 430
To pamper'd insolence devoted fall
Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall :
For wild ambition wings their bold desire,
And all to mount the imperial bed aspire.
But prostrate I implore, oh king ! relate 435
The mournful series of my father's fate :

Each known disaster of the man disclose,
 Born by his mother to a world of woes!
 Recite them; nor in erring pity fear
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear: 440
 If e'er Ulysses, to reclaim your right,
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
 If Phrygian camps the friendly toils attest,
 To the sire's merit give the son's request."

Deep from his inmost soul Atrides sigh'd, 445
 And thus indignant to the prince replied:
 "Heavens! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!
 So with her young, amid the woodland shades,
 A timorous hind the lion's court invades, 450
 Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,
 Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flowery lawns:
 Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway,
 The monarch savage rends the trembling prey.
 With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455
 Ulysses soon shall reassert his claim.
 Oh Jove, supreme, whom gods and men revere!
 And thou to whom 'tis given to gild the sphere!
 With power congenial join'd, propitious aid
 The chief adopted by the martial maid! 460
 Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when contending on the Lesbian shore
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd:
 Then soon the invaders of his bed and throne 465
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
 The storied labours of thy father's friend:
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue: 470
 Learn what I heard the seaborн seer relate,
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

458 Apollo.

" Long on the Egyptian coast by calms confined,
 Heaven to my fleet refused a prosperous wind ;
 No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim slain ! 475
 For this the gods each favouring gale restrain ;
 Jealous to see their high behests obey'd ;
 Severe, if men the eternal rights evade.
 High o'er a gulfy sea, the Pharian isle
 Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile : 480
 Her distance from the shore, the course begun
 At dawn, and ending with the sun,
 A galley measures ; when the stiffer gales
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.
 There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lie, 485
 While limpid springs the failing cask supply.

" And now the twentieth sun, descending, laves
 His glowing axle in the western waves ;
 Still with expanded sails we court in vain
 Propitious winds to waft us o'er the main : 490
 And the pale mariner at once deplores
 His drooping vigour and exhausted stores,
 When lo ! a bright cerulean form appears,
 The fair Eidothea, to dispel my fears ;
 Proteus her sire divine. With pity press'd, 495
 Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd ;
 What time, with hunger pined, my absent mates
 Roam the wild isle in search of rural cates,
 Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood
 Appease the afflictive fierce desire of food. 500

" ' Who'er thou art,' the azure goddess cries,
 ' Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wise :
 Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,
 That here inglorious on a barren coast
 Thy brave associates droop, a meager train 505
 With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain ?'

" Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply,
 ' Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,
 A goddess sure ! for more than mortal grace
 Speaks thee descendant of ethereal race : 510

Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains ;
 Some heavenly power averse my stay constrains :
 Oh, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to show
 (For what's sequester'd from celestial view ?)
 What power becalms the innavigable seas ; 515
 What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease.'

" I ceased, when, affable, the goddess cried :
 ' Observe, and in the truths I speak confide :
 The oraculous seer frequents the Pharian coast,
 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast ; 520
 Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
 The delegate of Neptune's watery reign.
 Watch with insidious care his known abode ;
 There fast in chains constrain the various god :
 Who bound, obedient to superior force, 525
 Unerring will prescribe your destined course.
 If, studious of your realms, you then demand
 Their state, since last you left your natal land ;
 Instant the god obsequious will disclose
 Bright tracts of glory, or a cloud of woes.' 530

" She ceased : and suppliant thus I made reply :
 ' Oh goddess ! on thy aid my hopes rely ;
 Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,
 What arts can captivate the changeful seer ;
 For perilous the assay, unheard the toil, 535
 To elude the prescience of a god by guile.'

" Thus to the goddess mild my suit I end.
 Then she : ' Obedient to my rule, attend :
 When through the zone of heaven the mounted sun
 Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run ; 540
 The seer, while zephyrs curl the swelling deep,
 Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,
 His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
 The phocæ swift surround the rocky cave,
 Frequent and full : the consecrated train 545
 Of her whose azure trident awes the main :
 There wallowing warm, the enormous herd exhales
 An oily steam, and taints the noontide gales.

To that recess, commodious for surprise,
When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550
With me repair; and from thy warrior band
Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command :
Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil;
For strong the god, and perfected in guile.
Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys 555
The flouncing herd ascending from the seas;
Their number summ'd, reposed in sleep profound
The scaly charge their guardian god surround :
So with his battening flocks the careful swain
Abides pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560
With powers united, obstinately bold,
Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold :
Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,
The mimic force of every savage shape ;
Or glides with liquid lapse a murmuring stream, 565
Or, wrapp'd in flame, he glows at every limb.
Yet still retentive, with redoubled might,
Through each vain passive form constrain his flight.
But when, his native shape resumed, he stands
Patient of conquest, and your cause demands ; 570
The cause that urged the bold attempt declare,
And sooth the vanquish'd with a victor's prayer.
The bands relax'd, implore the seer to say
What godhead interdicts the watery way.
Who straight propitious, in prophetic strain 575
Will teach you to repass the unmeasured main.'
She ceased, and bounding from the shelfy shore,
Round the descending nymph the waves redounding
 roar.

“High wrapp'd in wonder of the future deed,
With joy impetuous, to the port I speed ; 580
The wants of nature with repast suffice,
Till night with grateful shade involved the skies,
And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,
Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep,
Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn,
In saffron robes, the daughter of the dawn 586

Advanced her rosy steps ; before the bay,
 Due ritual honours to the gods I pay ;
 Then seek the place the seabor'n nymph assign'd,
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590
 Arrived, to form along the appointed strand
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand :
 Then, for her azure car the finny spoils
 Of four vast phocæ takes, to veil her wiles :
 Beneath the finny spoils, extended prone, 595
 Hard toil ! the prophet's piercing eye to shun ;
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse
 Unsavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze :
 But the bright sea maid's gentle power implored,
 With nectar'd drops the sickening sense restored.

“ Thus till the sun had travell'd half the skies 601
 Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise :
 When, thronging quick to bask in open air,
 The flocks of ocean to the strand repair :
 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep : 605
 Then Proteus, mounting from the hoary deep,
 Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit :
 (In order told, we make the sum complete.)
 Pleased with the false review, secure he lies,
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare
 A furious onset with the sound of war,
 And shouting seize the god : our force to evade,
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid :
 A lion now, he curls a surgy mane ; 615
 Sudden, our bands a spotted pard restrain :
 Then, arm'd with tusks, and lightning in his eyes,
 A boar's obscener shape the god belies :
 On spiry volumes, there, a dragon rides ;
 Here, from our strict embrace a stream he glides :
 And last, sublime, his stately growth he rears, 621
 A tree, and well-dissembled foliage wears.
 Vain efforts ! with superior power compress'd,
 Me with reluctance thus the seer address'd :

‘Say, son of Atreus, say what god inspired 625
This daring fraud, and what the boon desired?’

“I thus: ‘Oh thou, whose certain eye foresees
The fix’d event of fate’s remote decrees;
After long woes, and various toil endured,
Still on his desert isle my fleet is moor’d; 630
Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing! say,
What godhead interdicts the watery way?
What vows repentant will the power appease,
To speed a prosperous voyage o’er the seas?’

“‘To Jove,’ with stern regard the god replies, 635
‘And all the offended synod of the skies,
Just hecatombs with due devotion slain,
Thy guilt absolved, a prosperous voyage gain.
To the firm sanction of thy fate attend!
An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640
Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome,
Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom’d to roam.
Once more the Nile, who from the secret source
Of Jove’s high seat descends with sweepy force,
Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 645
And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.
Then will the gods, with holy pomp adored,
To thy long vows a safe return accord.’

“He ceased: heart wounded with afflictive pain,
(Doom’d to repeat the perils of the main, 650
A shelfy track and long,) ‘Oh seer,’ I cry,
‘To the stern sanction of the offended sky
My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,
What fate propitious, or what dire dismay,
Sustain those peers, the relics of our host, 655
Whom I with Nestor on the Phrygian coast
Embracing left? Must I the warriors weep,
Whelm’d in the bottom of the monstrous deep?
Or did the kind domestic friend deplore
The breathless heroes on their native shore?’ 660

“‘Press not too far,’ replied the god; ‘but cease
To know, what known will violate thy peace:

Too curious of their doom ! with friendly wo
 Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.
 Part live : the rest, a lamentable train, 665
 Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.
 Two, foremost in the roll of Mars renown'd,
 Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,
 Fell by disastrous fate : by tempests toss'd,
 A third lives wretched on a distant coast. 670

“ ‘ By Neptune rescued from Minerva's hate,
 On Gyræ, safe Oilean Ajax sat,
 His ship o'erwhelm'd ; but, frowning on the floods,
 Impious he roar'd defiance to the gods ;
 To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675
 The power defrauding who vouchsafed to save.
 This heard the raging ruler of the main ;
 His spear, indignant for such high disdain,
 He launch'd ; dividing with his forky mace
 The aerial summit from the marble base : 680
 The rock rush'd seaward with impetuous roar
 Ingulf'd, and to the abyss the boaster bore.

“ ‘ By Juno's guardian aid, the watery vast,
 Secure of storm, your royal brother pass'd :
 Till coasting nigh the cape, where Malea shrouds
 Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds ; 686
 A whirling gust tumultuous from the shore
 Across the deep his labouring vessel bore.
 In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,
 Where late in regal pomp Thyestes reign'd ; 690
 But, when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
 Ægysthus govern'd in paternal state.
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends ;
 From his tall ship the king of men descends ;
 There fondly thinks the gods conclude his toil ! 695
 Far from his own domain salutes the soil :
 With rapture oft the verge of Greece reviews,
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
 Him thus exulting on the distant strand,
 A spy distinguish'd from his airy stand ; 700

To bribe whose vigilance, Ægysthus told
A mighty sum of ill-persuading gold :
There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career ;
And now, admonish'd by his eye, to court 705
With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.
Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
The ministers of blood in dark surprise ;
And twenty youths in radiant mail incased,
Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he placed. 710
Then bids prepare the hospitable treat :
Vain shows of love to veil his felon-hate !
To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
A train of coursers, and triumphal cars
Magnificent he leads : the royal guest, 715
Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast.
The troop forth issuing from the dark recess
With homicidal rage the king oppress.
So, while he feeds luxurious in the stall,
The sovereign of the herd is doomed to fall. 720
The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,
Around their lord, a mighty ruin ! lie :
Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed ;
Ægysthus sole survives to boast the deed.'

"He said ; chill horrors shook my shivering soul,
Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roll ; 726
And hate, in madness of extreme despair,
To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.
But when, superior to the rage of wo,
I stood restored, and tears had ceased to flow ; 730
Lenient of grief, the pitying god began :
' Forget the brother, and resume the man :
To fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,
That care be fate's, a speedy passage thine.
Still lives the wretch who wrought the death de-
plored, 735
But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword ;
Unless with filial rage Orestes glow,
And swift prevent the meditated blow :

You timely will return a welcome guest,
With him to share the sad funereal feast.' 740

“He said: new thoughts my beating heart employ,

My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.
Fair hope revives; and eager I address'd
The prescient godhead to reveal the rest:
'The doom decreed of those disastrous two 745

I've heard with pain, but, oh! the tale pursue;
What third brave son of Mars the fates constrain
To roam the howling desert of the main;
Or, in eternal shade if cold he lies,
Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes.' 750

“‘That chief,’ rejoin'd the god, ‘his race derives
From Ithaca, and wondrous woes survives;
Laertes' son, girt with circumfluous tides,
He still calamitous constraint abides.

Him in Calypso's cave of late I view'd, 755
When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.

But vain his prayer, his arts are vain, to move
The enamour'd goddess, or elude her love:
His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,
He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760

But oh, beloved by Heaven! reserved to thee
A happier lot the smiling fates decree:
Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
Matter is changed, and varying forms decay;

Elysium shall be thine; the blissful plains 765
Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.

Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
Fill the wide circle of the eternal year:
Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime:
The fields are florid with unfading prime; 770

From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow;
But from the breezy deep the bless'd inhale
The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.

This grace peculiar will the gods afford 775
To thee, the son of Jove, and beauteous Helen's lord.'

“ He ceased, and plunging in the vast profound,
Beneath the god the whirling billows bound.
Then speeding back, involved in various thought,
My friends attending at the shore I sought. 780
Arrived, the rage of hunger we control,
Till night with silent shade invests the pole ;
Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest.
Soon as the morn reveals the roseate east,
With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh,
Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea. 786
Ranged on the banks, beneath our equal oars
White curl the waves, and the vex’d ocean roars.
Then steering backward from the Pharian isle,
We gain the stream of Jove-descended Nile : 790
There quit the ships, and on the destined shore
With ritual hecatombs the gods adore :
Their wrath atoned, to Agamemnon’s name
A cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.
These rites to piety and grief discharged, 795
The friendly gods a springing gale enlarged :
The fleet swift tilting o’er the surges flew,
Till Grecian cliffs appear’d, a blissful view !
“ Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate
A story, fruitful of disastrous fate : 800
And now, young prince, indulge my fond request :
Be Sparta honour’d with his royal guest,
Till, from his eastern goal, the joyous sun
His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.
Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805
Three sprightly coursers, and a polish’d car :
With these, a goblet of capacious mould,
Figured with art to dignify the gold,
(Form’d for libation to the gods,) shall prove
A pledge and monument of sacred love.” 810
“ My quick return,” young Ithacus rejoin’d,
“ Damps the warm wishes of my raptured mind :
Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,
Charm’d by your speech so grateful and humane,

Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815
 While deep attention fix'd my listening soul.
 But now to Pyle permit my destined way,
 My loved associates chide my long delay:
 In dear remembrance of your royal grace
 I take the present of the promised vase : 820
 The coursers, for the champaign sports, retain;
 That gift our barren rocks will render vain:
 Horrid with cliffs, our meager land allows
 Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browse,
 But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825
 The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed:
 To sea-surrounded realms the gods assign
 Small tract of fertile lawn, the least to mine."

His hand the king with tender passion press'd,
 And, smiling, thus the royal youth address'd: 830
 "Oh early worth! a soul so wise, and young,
 Proclaims you from the sage Ulysses sprung.
 Selected from my stores, of matchless price
 An urn shall recompense your prudent choice:
 Nor mean the massy mould of silver, graced 835
 By Vulcan's art, the verge with gold enchased;
 A pledge the sceptred power of Sidon gave,
 When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave."

Thus they alternate; while with artful care
 The menial train the regal feast prepare: 840
 The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to die;
 Rich fragrant wines the cheering bowl supply;
 A female band the gift of Ceres bring;
 And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Meanwhile, in Ithaca, the suitor powers 845
 In active games divide their jovial hours:
 In areas varied with mosaic art,
 Some whirl the disk, and some the javelin dart.
 Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,
 Antinous sat spectator of the sport; 850
 With great Eurymachus, of worth confess'd,
 And high descent, superior to the rest;
 Whom young Noemon lowly thus address'd.

"My ship, equipp'd within the neighbouring port,
'The prince, departing for the Pylian court, 855
Requested for his speed; but, courteous, say
When steers he home, or why this long delay?
For Elis I should sail with utmost speed,
To import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
And twelve young mules, a strong laborious race,
New to the plough, unpractised in the trace." 861

Unknowing of the course to Pyle design'd,
A sudden horror seized on either mind:
'The prince in rural bower they fondly thought,
Numbering his flocks and herds, not far remote. 865
"Relate," Antinous cries, "devoid of guile,
When spread the prince his sail for distant Pyle?
Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main
Attend his voyage, or domestic train?
Spontaneous did you speed his secret course, 870
Or was the vessel seized by fraud or force?"

"With willing duty, not reluctant mind,"
Noemon cried, "the vessel was resign'd.
Who, in the balance, with the great affairs
Of courts, presume to weigh their private cares?
With him, the peerage next in power to you; 876
And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,
Or some celestial in his rev'rend form,
Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,
Pilots the course: for when the glimmering ray
Of yester dawn disclosed the tender day, 881
Mentor himself I saw, and much admired."
'Then ceased the youth, and from the court retired.

Confounded and appall'd, the unfinish'd game
The suitors quit, and all to council came. 885
Antinous first the assembled peers address'd,
Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast:
"Oh shame to manhood! shall one daring boy
The scheme of all our happiness destroy?
Fly unperceived, seducing half the flower 890
Of nobles, and invite a foreign power?"

The ponderous ensign raised to crush us all,
 Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.
 Instant prepare me, on the neighbouring strand,
 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd ; 895
 For ambush'd close beneath the Samian shore
 His ship returning shall my spies explore :
 He soon his rashness shall with life atone,
 Seek for his father's fate, but find his own."

With vast applause the sentence all approve : 900
 Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove :
 Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,
 Who heard the consult of the dire divan :
 Before her dome the royal matron stands,
 And thus the message of his haste demands : 905

"What will the suitors ? must my servant train
 The allotted labours of the day refrain,
 For them to form some exquisite repast ?
 Heaven grant this festival may prove their last !
 Or, if they still must live, from me remove 910
 The double plague of luxury and love !
 Forbear, ye sons of insolence ! forbear,
 In riot to consume a wretched heir.
 In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,
 Were ye not tutor'd with Ulysses' praise ? 915
 Have not your fathers oft my lord defined,
 Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind ?
 Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,
 Or in their tyrant minions vest the power :
 Ulysses let no partial favours fall, 920
 The people's parent, he protected all ;
 But absent now, perfidious and ingrate !
 His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state."

He thus : "Oh were the woes you speak the worst !
 They form a deed more odious and accursed ; 925
 More dreadful than your boding soul divines :
 But pitying Jove avert the dire designs !
 The darling object of your royal care
 Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare :

Before he anchors in his native port, 930
From Pyle resailing and the Spartan court ;
Horrid to speak ! in ambush is decreed
The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed !”

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,
The vital streams a chilling horror froze ; 935
The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,
And on her tongue imperfect accents die.
At length, in tender language interwove
With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love :
“ Why rashly would my son his fate explore, 940
Ride the wild waves and quit the safer shore ?
Did he, with all the greatly wretched, crave
A blank oblivion, and untimely grave ?”

“ ’Tis not,” replied the sage, “ to Medon given
To know, if some inhabitant of heaven 945
In his young breast the daring thought inspired ;
Or if, alone with filial duty fired,
The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,
Studious to learn his absent father’s doom.”

The sage retired : unable to control 950
The mighty griefs that swell her labouring soul,
Rolling convulsive on the floor is seen
The piteous object of a prostrate queen.
Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,
And breath, to waste in unavailing cries. 955
Around their sovereign wept the menial fair,
To whom she thus address’d her deep despair :

“ Behold a wretch whom all the gods consign
To wo ! Did ever sorrows equal mine ?
Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost, 960
His country’s buckler, and the Grecian boast :
Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,
Our other column of the state is borne ;
Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent.
Unkind confederates in his dire intent ! 965
Ill suits it with your shows of duteous zeal,
From me the purposed voyage to conceal :

Though at the solemn midnight hour he rose,
 Why did you fear to trouble my repose ?
 He either had obey'd my fond desire ; 970
 Or seen his mother pierced with grief expire.
 Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful slave
 Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,
 To tend the fruit groves : with incessant speed
 He shall this violence of death decreed 975
 To good Laertes tell. Experienced age
 May timely intercept the ruffian rage.
 Convene the tribes, the murderous plot reveal,
 And to their power to save his race appeal."

'Then Euryclea thus : " My dearest dread ! 980
 Though to the sword I bow this hoary head,
 Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,
 I own me conscious of the unpleasing deed :
 Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implored,
 With wine and viands I the vessel stored ; 985
 A solemn oath, imposed, the secret seal'd,
 Till the twelfth dawn the light of heaven reveal'd.
 Dreading the effect of a fond mother's fear,
 He dared not violate your royal ear.
 But bathe, and, in imperial robes array'd, 990
 Pay due devotions to the martial maid,
 And rest affianced in her guardian aid.
 Send not to good Laertes, nor engage
 In toils of state the miseries of age :
 'Tis impious to surmise, the powers divine 995
 To ruin doom the Jove-descended line :
 Long shall the race of just Arcesius reign,
 And isles remote enlarge his old domain."

The queen her speech with calm attention hears,
 Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears : 1000
 She bathes, and, robed, the sacred dome ascends ;
 Her pious speed a female train attends :
 The salted cakes in canisters are laid,
 And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid : 1004

" Daughter divine of Jove, whose arm can wield
 The avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield !
 If e'er Ulysses to thy fane preferr'd
 The best and choicest of his flock and herd ;
 Hear, goddess, hear, by those oblations won ;
 And for the pious sire preserve the son : 1010
 His wish'd return with happy power befriend,
 And on the suitors let thy wrath descend."

She ceased : shrill ecstasies of joy declare
 The favouring goddess present to the prayer :
 The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
 A signal of her hymneal choice : 1016
 While one most jovial thus accosts the board :
 ' Too late the queen selects a second lord ;
 In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,
 When o'er her son disastrous death impends." 1020
 Thus he unskill'd of what the fates provide !
 But with severe rebuke Antinous cried :

" These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain :
 Alarm not with discourse the menial train :
 The great event with silent hope attend ; 1025
 Our deeds alone our counsel must commend."
 His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,
 And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :
 Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,
 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030
 Replete with mail and military store,
 In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.
 The desperate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;
 (The seaward prow invites the tardy gales ;)
 Then take repast, till Hesperus display'd 1035
 His golden circlet in the western shade.

Meantime the queen, without reflection due,
 Heart wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :
 In her sad breast the prince's fortunes roll,
 And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040
 So when the woodman's toil her cave surrounds,
 And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;

With grief and rage the mother lion stung,
Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young. 1044

While pensive in the silent slumberous shade,
Sleep's gentle powers her drooping eyes invade ;
Minerva, lifelike, on imbodied air
Impress'd the form of Iphthima the fair :
(Icarius' daughter she, whose blooming charms
Allured Eumelus to her virgin arms ; 1050

A sceptred lord, who o'er the fruitful plain
Of Thessaly wide stretch'd his ample reign :)
As Pallas will'd, along the sable skies,
To calm the queen, the phantom sister flies.
Swift on the regal dome, descending right, 1055
The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.

Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,
And thus performs Minerva's high commands :

“ Oh why, Penelope, this causeless fear,
To render sleep's soft blessing insincere ? 1060

Alike devote to sorrow's dire extreme
The day reflection, and the midnight dream !
Thy son the gods propitious will restore,
And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.”

To whom the queen, while yet her pensive mind
Was in the silent gates of sleep confined : 1066

“ Oh sister, to my soul for ever dear,
Why this first visit to reprove my fear ?
How in a realm so distant should you know
From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows flow ?
To all my hope my royal lord is lost, 1071

His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast :
And with consummate wo to weigh me down,
The heir of all his honours and his crown,
My darling son is fled ! an easy prey 1075

To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they ;
Who in a league of blood associates sworn,
Will intercept the unwary youth's return.”

“ Courage resume,” the shadowy form replied,
‘ In the protecting care of Heaven confide : 1080

On him attends the blue-eyed martial maid ;
What earthly can implore a surer aid ?
Me now the guardian goddess deigns to send,
To bid thee patient his return attend." 1084

The queen replies : " If in the bless'd abodes,
A goddess, thou hast commerce with the gods ;
Say, breathes my lord the blissful realm of light,
Or lies he wrapp'd in ever-during night ?"

" Inquire not of his doom," the phantom cries,
" I speak not all the counsel of the skies : 1090
Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,
The windy satisfaction of the tongue."

Swift through the valves the visionary fair
Repass'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.
The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes ; 1095
With florid joy her heart dilating glows :
The vision, manifest of future fate,
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the suitors plough the watery plain,
Telemachus in thought already slain ! 1100
When sight of lessening Ithaca was lost,
Their sail directed for the Samian coast,
A small but verdant isle appear'd in view,
And Asteris the advancing pilot knew :
An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105
To break the rolling waves and ruffling storm :
That safe recess they gain with happy speed,
And in close ambush wait the murderous deed.

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